MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS
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THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS

TOWARDS the end of the year 1665, on a fine autumn evening, there was a considerable crowd assembled on the Pont-Neuf where it makes a turn down to the rue Dauphine. The object of this crowd and the centre of attraction was a closely shut carriage. A police official was trying to force open the door, and two out of the four sergeants who were with him were holding the horses back and the other two stopping the driver, who paid no attention to their commands, but only endeavoured to urge his horses to a gallop. The struggle had been going on some time, when suddenly one of the doors was violently pushed open, and a young officer in the uniform of a cavalry captain jumped down, shutting the door as he did so, though not too quickly for the nearest spectators to perceive a woman sitting at the back of the carriage. She was wrapped in cloak and veil, and judging by the precautions she had taken to hide her face from every eye, she must have had her reasons for avoiding recognition.

" Sir," said the young man, addressing the officer

with a haughty air, "I presume, till I find myself mistaken, that your business is with me alone; so I will ask you to inform me what powers you may have for thus stopping my coach; also, since I have alighted, I desire you to give your men orders to let the vehicle go on."

"First of all," replied the man, by no means intimidated by these lordly airs, but signing to his men that they must not release the coach or the horses, "be so good as to answer my questions."

"I am attending," said the young man, controlling his agitation by a visible effort.

"Are you the Chevalier Gaudin de Sainte-Croix?"

"I am he."

"Captain of the Tracy regiment?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I arrest you in the king's name."

"What powers have you?"

"This warrant."

Sainte-Croix cast a rapid glance at the paper, and instantly recognised the signature of the minister of police: he then apparently confined his attention to the woman who was still in the carriage; then he returned to his first question.

"This is all very well, sir," he said to the officer, "but this warrant contains no other name than mine, and so you have no right to expose thus to

the public gaze the lady with whom I was travelling when you arrested me. I must beg of you to order your assistants to allow this carriage to drive on; then take me where you please, for I am ready to go with you."

To the officer this request seemed a just one: he signed to his men to let the driver and the horses go on; and they, who had waited only for this, lost no time in breaking through the crowd, which melted away before them; thus the woman escaped for whose safety the prisoner seemed so much concerned.

Sainte-Croix kept his promise and offered no resistance; for some moments he followed the officer, surrounded by a crowd which seemed to have transferred all its curiosity to his account; then, at the corner of the Quai de d'Horloge, a man called up a carriage that had not been observed before, and Sainte-Croix took his place with the same haughty and disdainful air that he had shown throughout the scene we have just described. The officer sat beside him, two of his men got up behind, and the other two, obeying no doubt their master's orders, retired with a parting direction to the driver, "The Bastille!"

Our readers will now permit us to make them more fully acquainted with the man who is to take the first place in the story. The origin of Gaudin

de Sainte-Croix was not known: according to one tale, he was the natural son of a great lord; another account declared that he was the offspring of poor people, but that, disgusted with his obscure birth, he preferred a splendid disgrace, and therefore chose to pass for what he was not. The only certainty is that he was born at Montauban, and in actual rank and position he was captain of the Tracy regiment. At the time when this narrative opens, towards the end of 1665, Sainte-Croix was about twenty-eight or thirty, a fine young man of cheerful and lively appearance, a merry comrade at a banquet, and an excellent captain: he took his pleasure with other men, and was so impressionable a character that he enjoyed a virtuous project as well as any plan for a debauch; in love he was most susceptible, and jealous to the point of madness even about a courtesan, had she once taken his fancy; his prodigality was princely, although he had no income; further, he was most sensitive to slights, as all men are who, because they are placed in an equivocal position, fancy that everyone who makes any reference to their origin is offering an intentional insult.

We must now see by what a chain of circumstances he had arrived at his present position. About the year 1660, Sainte-Croix, while in the army, had made the acquaintance of the Marquis de Brinvilliers, maître-de-camp of the Normandy regiment.

Their age was much the same, and so was their manner of life: their virtues and their vices were similar, and thus it happened that a mere acquaintance grew into a friendship, and on his return from the field the marquis introduced Sainte-Croix to his wife, and he became an intimate of the house. The usual results followed. Madame de Brinvilliers was then scarcely eight-and-twenty: she had married the marquis in 1651—that is, nine years before. He enjoyed an income of 30,000 livres, to which she added her dowry of 200,000 livres, exclusive of her expectations in the future. Her name was Marie-Madeleine; she had a sister and two brothers: her father, M. de Dreux d'Aubray, was civil lieutenant at the Châtelet de Paris. At the age of twenty-eight the marquise was at the height of her beauty: her figure was small but perfectly proportioned; her rounded face was charmingly pretty; her features, so regular that no emotion seemed to alter their beauty, suggested the lines of a statue miraculously endowed with life: it was easy enough to mistake for the repose of a happy conscience the cold, cruel calm which served as a mask to cover remorse.

Sainte-Croix and the marquise loved at first sight, and she was soon his mistress. The marquis, perhaps endowed with the conjugal philosophy which alone pleased the taste of the period, perhaps too

much occupied with his own pleasure to see what was going on before his eyes, offered no jealous obstacle to the intimacy, and continued his foolish extravagances long after they had impaired his fortunes: his affairs became so entangled that the marquise, who cared for him no longer, and desired a fuller liberty for the indulgence of her new passion, demanded and obtained a separation. She then left her husband's house, and henceforth abandoning all discretion, appeared everywhere in public with Sainte-Croix. This behaviour, authorised as it was by the example of the highest nobility, made no impression upon the Marquis of Brinvilliers, who merrily pursued the road to ruin, without worrying about his wife's behaviour. Not so M. de Dreux d'Aubray: he had the scrupulosity of a legal dignitary. He was scandalised at his daughter's conduct, and feared a stain upon his own fair name: he procured a warrant for the arrest of Sainte-Croix wheresoever the bearer might chance to encounter him. We have seen how it was put in execution when Sainte-Croix was driving in the carriage of the marquise, whom our readers will doubtless have recognised as the woman who concealed herself so carefully.

From one's knowledge of the character of Sainte-Croix, it is easy to imagine that he had to use great self-control to govern the anger he felt at being

arrested in the middle of the street; thus, although during the whole drive he uttered not a single word, it was plain to see that a terrible storm was gathering, soon to break. But he preserved the same impassibility both at the opening and shutting of the fatal gates, which, like the gates of hell, had so often bidden those who entered abandon all hope on their threshold, and again when he replied to the formal questions put to him by the governor. His voice was calm, and when they gave him the prison register he signed it with a steady hand. At once a gaoler, taking his orders from the governor, bade him follow: after traversing various corridors, cold and damp, where the daylight might sometimes enter but fresh air never, he opened a door, and Sainte-Croix had no sooner entered than he heard it locked behind him.

At the grating of the lock he turned. The gaoler had left him with no light but the rays of the moon, which, shining through a barred window some eight or ten feet from the ground, shed a gleam upon a miserable truckle-bed and left the rest of the room in deep obscurity. The prisoner stood still for a moment and listened; then, when he had heard the steps die away in the distance and knew himself to be alone at last, he fell upon the bed with a cry more like the roaring of a wild beast than any human sound: he cursed his fellow-man who had

snatched him from his joyous life to plunge him into a dungeon; he cursed his God who had let this happen; he cried aloud to whatever powers might be that could grant him revenge and liberty.

Just at that moment, as though summoned by these words from the bowels of the earth, a man slowly stepped into the circle of blue light that fell from the window—a man thin and pale, a man with long hair, in a black doublet, who approached the foot of the bed where Sainte-Croix lay. Brave as he was, this apparition so fully answered to his prayers (and at the period the power of incantation and magic was still believed in) that he felt no doubt that the arch-enemy of the human race, who is continually at hand, had heard him and had now come in answer to his prayers. He sat up on the bed, feeling mechanically at the place where the handle of his sword would have been but two hours since, feeling his hair stand on end, and a cold sweat began to stream down his face as the strange fantastic being step by step approached him. At length the apparition paused, the prisoner and he stood face to face for a moment, their eyes riveted; then the mysterious stranger spoke in gloomy tones.

"Young man," said he, "you have prayed to the devil for vengeance on the men who have taken you, for help against the God who has abandoned you. I

have the means, and I am here to proffer it. Have you the courage to accept?"

"First of all," asked Sainte-Croix, "who are you?"

"Why seek you to know who I am," replied the unknown, "at the very moment when I come at your call, and bring what you desire?"

"All the same," said Sainte-Croix, still attributing what he heard to a supernatural being, "when one makes a compact of this kind, one prefers to know with whom one is treating."

"Well, since you must know," said the stranger, "I am the Italian Exili."

Sainte-Croix shuddered anew, passing from a supernatural vision to a horrible reality. The name he had just heard had a terrible notoriety at the time, not only in France but in Italy as well. Exili had been driven out of Rome, charged with many poisonings, which, however, could not be satisfactorily brought home to him. He had gone to Paris, and there, as in his native country, he had drawn the eyes of the authorities upon himself; but neither in Paris nor in Rome was he, the pupil of René and of Trophana, convicted of guilt. All the same, though proof was wanting, his enormities were so well accredited that there was no scruple as to having him arrested. A warrant was out against him: Exili was taken up, and was lodged in the

Bastille. He had been there about six months when Sainte-Croix was brought to the same place. The prisoners were numerous just then, so the governor had his new guest put up in the same room as the old one, mating Exili and Sainte-Croix, not knowing that they were a pair of demons. Our readers now understand the rest. Sainte-Croix was put into an unlighted room by the gaoler, and in the dark had failed to see his companion: he had abandoned himself to his rage, his imprecations had revealed his state of mind to Exili, who at once seized the occasion for gaining a devoted and powerful disciple, who once out of prison might open the doors for him, perhaps, or at least avenge his fate should he be incarcerated for life.

The repugnance felt by Sainte-Croix for his fellow-prisoner did not last long, and the clever master found his pupil apt. Sainte-Croix, a strange mixture of qualities good and evil, had reached the supreme crisis of his life, when the powers of darkness or of light were to prevail. Maybe, if he had met some angelic soul at this point, he would have been led to God; he encountered a demon, who conducted him to Satan.

Exili was no vulgar poisoner: he was a great artist in poisons, comparable with the Medici or the Borgias. For him murder was a fine art, and he had reduced it to fixed and rigid rules: he had

arrived at a point when he was guided not by his personal interest but by a taste for experiment. God has reserved the act of creation for Himself, but has suffered destruction to be within the scope of man: man therefore supposes that in destroying life he is God's equal. Such was the nature of Exili's pride: he was the dark, pale alchemist of death: others might seek the mighty secret of life, but he had found the secret of destruction.

For a time Sainte-Croix hesitated: at last he yielded to the taunts of his companion, who accused Frenchmen of showing too much honour in their crimes, of allowing themselves to be involved in the ruin of their enemies, whereas they might easily survive them and triumph over their destruction. In opposition to this French gallantry, which often involves the murderer in a death more cruel than that he has given, he pointed to the Florentine traitor with his amiable smile and his deadly poison. He indicated certain powders and potions, some of them of dull action, wearing out the victim so slowly that he dies after long suffering; others violent and so quick, that they kill like a flash of lightning, leaving not even time for a single cry. Little by little Sainte-Croix became interested in the ghastly science that puts the lives of all men in the hand of one. He joined in Exili's experiments; then he grew clever enough to make them for him-

self; and when, at the year's end, he left the Bastille, the pupil was almost as accomplished as his master.

Sainte-Croix returned into that society which had banished him, fortified by a fatal secret by whose aid he could repay all the evil he had received. Soon afterwards Exili was set free—how it happened is not known—and sought out Sainte-Croix, who let him a room in the name of his steward, Martin de Breuille, a room situated in the blind alley off the Place Maubert, owned by a woman called Brunet.

It is not known whether Sainte-Croix had an opportunity of seeing the Marquise de Brinvilliers during his sojourn in the Bastille, but it is certain that as soon as he was a free man the lovers were more attached than ever. They had learned by experience, however, of what they had to fear; so they resolved that they would at once make trial of Sainte-Croix's newly acquired knowledge, and M. d'Aubray was selected by his daughter for the first victim. At one blow she would free herself from the inconvenience of his rigid censorship, and by inheriting his goods would repair her own fortune, which had been almost dissipated by her husband. But in trying such a bold stroke one must be very sure of results, so the marquise decided to experiment beforehand on another person. Accordingly,

when one day after luncheon her maid, Françoise Roussel, came into her room, she gave her a slice of mutton and some preserved gooseberries for her own meal. The girl unsuspiciously ate what her mistress gave her, but almost at once felt ill, saying she had severe pain in the stomach, and a sensation as though her heart were being pricked with pins. But she did not die, and the marquise perceived that the poison needed to be made stronger, and returned it to Sainte-Croix, who brought her some more in a few days' time.

The moment had come for action. M. d'Aubray, tired with business, was to spend a holiday at his castle called Offemont. The marquise offered to go with him. M. d'Aubray, who supposed her relations with Sainte-Croix to be quite broken off, joyfully accepted. Offemont was exactly the place for a crime of this nature. In the middle of the forest of Aigue, three or four miles from Compiègne, it would be impossible to get efficient help before the rapid action of the poison had made it useless.

M. d'Aubray started with his daughter and one servant only. Never had the marquise been so devoted to her father, so especially attentive, as she was during this journey. And M. d'Aubray, like Christ—who though He had no children had a father's heart—loved his repentant daughter more

than if she had never strayed. And then the marquise profited by the terrible calm look which we have already noticed in her face: always with her father, sleeping in a room adjoining his, eating with him, caring for his comfort in every way, thoughtful and affectionate, allowing no other person to do anything for him, she had to present a smiling face, in which the most suspicious eye could detect nothing but filial tenderness, though the vilest projects were in her heart. With this mask she one evening offered him some soup that was poisoned. He took it; with her eyes she saw him put it to his lips, watched him drink it down, and with a brazen countenance she gave no outward sign of that terrible anxiety that must have been pressing on her heart. When he had drunk it all, and she had taken with steady hands the cup and its saucer, she went back to her own room, waited and listened . . .

The effect was rapid. The marquise heard her father moan; then she heard groans. At last, unable to endure his sufferings, he called out to his daughter. The marquise went to him. But now her face showed signs of the liveliest anxiety, and it was for M. d'Aubray to try to reassure her about himself! He thought it was only a trifling indisposition, and was not willing that a doctor should be disturbed. But then he was seized by a frightful

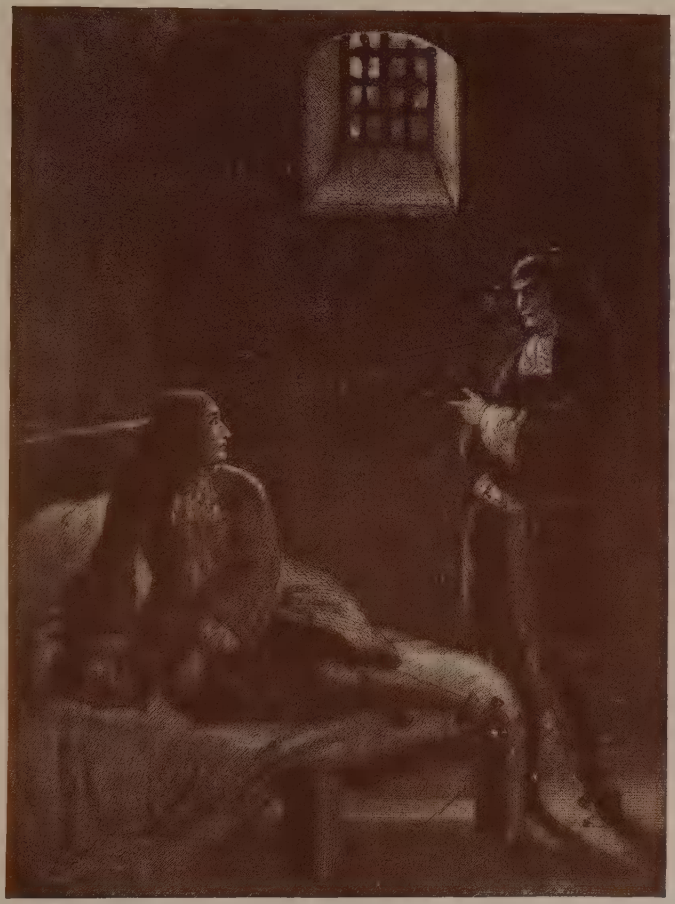
vomiting, followed by such unendurable pain that he yielded to his daughter's entreaty that she should send for help. A doctor arrived at about eight o'clock in the morning, but by that time all that could have helped a scientific inquiry had been disposed of: the doctor saw nothing in M. d'Aubray's story but what might be accounted for by indigestion; so he dosed him, and went back to Compiègne.

All that day the marquise never left the sick man. At night she had a bed made up in his room, declaring that no one else must sit up with him; thus she was able to watch the progress of the malady and see with her own eyes the conflict between death and life in the body of her father. The next day the doctor came again: M. d'Aubray was worse; the nausea had ceased, but the pains in the stomach were now more acute; a strange fire seemed to burn his vitals; and a treatment was ordered which necessitated his return to Paris. He was soon so weak that he thought it might be best to go only so far as Compiègne, but the marquise was so insistent as to the necessity for further and better advice than anything he could get away from home, that M. d'Aubray decided to go. He made the journey in his own carriage, leaning upon his daughter's shoulder; the behaviour of the marquise was always the same: at last M. d'Aubray reached Paris. All

had taken place as the marquise desired; for the scene was now changed: the doctor who had witnessed the symptoms would not be present at the death; no one could discover the cause by studying the progress of the disorder; the thread of investigation was snapped in two, and the two ends were now too distant to be joined again. In spite of every possible attention, M. d'Aubray grew continually worse; the marquise was faithful to her mission, and never left him for an hour. At last, after four days of agony, he died in his daughter's arms, blessing the woman who was his murderess. Her grief then broke forth uncontrolled. Her sobs and tears were so vehement that her brothers' grief seemed cold beside hers. Nobody suspected a crime, so no autopsy was held; the tomb was closed, and not the slightest suspicion had approached her.

But the marquise had only gained half her purpose. She had now more freedom for her love affairs, but her father's dispositions were not so favourable as she expected: the greater part of his property, together with his business, passed to the elder brother and to the second brother, who was Parliamentary councillor; the position of the marquise was very little improved in point of fortune.

Sainte-Croix was leading a fine and joyous life. Although nobody supposed him to be wealthy, he had a steward called Martin, three lackeys called



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George, Lapierre, and Lachaussée, and besides his coach and other carriages he kept ordinary bearers for excursions at night. As he was young and good-looking, nobody troubled about where all these luxuries came from. It was quite the custom in those days that a well-set-up young gentleman should want for nothing, and Sainte-Croix was commonly said to have found the philosopher's stone. In his life in the world he had formed friendships with various persons, some noble, some rich: among the latter was a man named Reich de Penautier, receiver-general of the clergy and treasurer of the States of Languedoc, a millionaire, and one of those men who are always successful, and who seem able by the help of their money to arrange matters that would appear to be in the province of God alone. This Penautier was connected in business with a man called d'Alibert, his first clerk, who died all of a sudden of apoplexy. The attack was known to Penautier sooner than to his own family: then the papers about the conditions of partnership disappeared, no one knew how, and d'Alibert's wife and child were ruined. D'Alibert's brother-in-law, who was Sieur de la Magdelaine, felt certain vague suspicions concerning this death, and wished to get to the bottom of it; he accordingly began investigations, which were suddenly brought to an end by his death.

In one way alone Fortune seemed to have abandoned her favourite: Maître Penautier had a great desire to succeed the Sieur of Mennevillette, who was receiver of the clergy, and this office was worth nearly 60,000 livres. Penautier knew that Mennevillette was retiring in favour of his chief clerk, Messire Pierre Hannyvel, Sieur de Saint-Laurent, and he had taken all the necessary steps for buying the place over his head: the Sieur de Saint-Laurent, with the full support of the clergy, obtained the reversion for nothing—a thing that never happened before. Penautier then offered him 40,000 crowns to go halves, but Saint-Laurent refused. Their relations, however, were not broken off, and they continued to meet. Penautier was considered such a lucky fellow that it was generally expected he would somehow or other get some day the post he coveted so highly. People who had no faith in the mysteries of alchemy declared that Sainte-Croix and Penautier did business together.

Now, when the period for mourning was over, the relations of the marquise and Sainte-Croix were as open and public as before: the two brothers d'Aubray expostulated with her by the medium of an older sister who was in a Carmelite nunnery, and the marquise perceived that her father had on his death bequeathed the care and supervision of her to her brothers. Thus her first crime had been

all but in vain: she had wanted to get rid of her father's rebukes and to gain his fortune; as a fact the fortune was diminished by reason of her elder brothers, and she had scarcely enough to pay her debts; while the rebukes were renewed from the mouths of her brothers, one of whom, being civil lieutenant, had the power to separate her again from her lover. This must be prevented. Lachaussée left the service of Sainte-Croix, and by a contrivance of the marquise was installed three months later as servant of the elder brother, who lived with the civil lieutenant. The poison to be used on this occasion was not so swift as the one taken by M. d'Aubray: so violent a death happening so soon in the same family might arouse suspicion. Experiments were tried once more, not on animals—for their different organisation might put the poisoner's science in the wrong—but as before upon human subjects; as before, a *corpus vili* was taken. The marquise had the reputation of a pious and charitable lady; seldom did she fail to relieve the poor who appealed: more than this, she took part in the work of those devoted women who are pledged to the service of the sick, and she walked the hospitals and presented wine and other medicaments. No one was surprised when she appeared in her ordinary way at l'Hôtel-Dieu. This time she brought biscuits and cakes for the convalescent patients, her gifts being, as usual, gratefully

was a pigeon-pie for dinner: seven persons who had eaten it felt indisposed after the meal, and the three who had not taken it were perfectly well. Those on whom the poisonous substance had chiefly acted were the lieutenant, the councillor, and the commandant of the watch. He may have eaten more, or possibly the poison he had tasted on the former occasion helped, but at any rate the lieutenant was the first to be attacked with vomiting: two hours later, the councillor showed the same symptoms; the commandant and the others were a prey for several hours to frightful internal pains; but from the beginning their condition was not nearly so grave as that of the two brothers. This time again, as usual, the help of doctors was useless. On the 12th of April, five days after they had been poisoned, the lieutenant and his brother returned to Paris so changed that anyone would have thought they had both suffered a long and cruel illness. Madame de Brinvilliers was in the country at the time, and did not come back during the whole time that her brothers were ill. From the very first consultation in the lieutenant's case the doctors entertained no hope. The symptoms were the same as those to which his father had succumbed, and they supposed it was an unknown disease in the family. They gave up all hope of recovery. Indeed, his state grew worse and worse; he felt an

unconquerable aversion for every kind of food, and the vomiting was incessant. The last three days of his life he complained that a fire was burning in his breast, and the flames that burned within seemed to blaze forth at his eyes, the only part of his body that appeared to live, so like a corpse was all the rest of him. On the 17th of June 1670 he died: the poison had taken seventy-two days to complete its work. Suspicion began to dawn: the lieutenant's body was opened, and a formal report was drawn up. The operation was performed in the presence of the surgeons Dupré and Durant, and Gavart, the apothecary, by M. Bachot, the brothers' private physician. They found the stomach and duodenum to be black and falling to pieces, the liver burnt and gangrened. They said that this state of things must have been produced by poison, but as the presence of certain bodily humours sometimes produces similar appearances, they durst not declare that the lieutenant's death could not have come about by natural causes, and he was buried without further inquiry.

It was as his private physician that Dr. Bachot had asked for the autopsy of his patient's brother. For the younger brother seemed to have been attacked by the same complaint, and the doctor hoped to find from the death of the one some means for preserving the life of the other. The councillor

was in a violent fever, agitated unceasingly both in body and mind: he could not bear any position of any kind for more than a few minutes at a time. Bed was a place of torture; but if he got up, he cried for it again, at least for a change of suffering. At the end of three months he died. His stomach, duodenum, and liver were all in the same corrupt state as his brother's, and more than that, the surface of his body was burnt away. This, said the doctors, was no dubious sign of poisoning; although, they added, it sometimes happened that a *cacochyme* produced the same effect. Lachaussée was so far from being suspected, that the councillor, in recognition of the care he had bestowed on him in his last illness, left him in his will a legacy of a hundred crowns; moreover, he received a thousand francs from Sainte-Croix and the marquise.

So great a disaster in one family, however, was not only sad but alarming. Death knows no hatred: death is deaf and blind, nothing more, and astonishment was felt at this ruthless destruction of all who bore one name. Still nobody suspected the true culprits, search was fruitless, inquiries led nowhere: the marquise put on mourning for her brothers, Sainte-Croix continued in his path of folly, and all things went on as before. Meanwhile Sainte-Croix had made the acquaintance of the Sieur de Saint-

Laurent, the same man from whom Penautier had asked for a post without success, and had made friends with him. Penautier had meanwhile become the heir of his father-in-law, the Sieur Lesecq, whose death had most unexpectedly occurred; he had thereby gained a second post in Languedoc and an immense property: still, he coveted the place of receiver of the clergy. Chance now once more helped him: a few days after taking over from Sainte-Croix a man-servant named George, M. de Saint-Laurent fell sick, and his illness showed symptoms similar to those observed in the case of the d'Aubrays, father and sons; but it was more rapid, lasting only twenty-four hours. Like them, M. de Saint-Laurent died a prey to frightful tortures. The same day an officer from the sovereign's court came to see him, heard every detail connected with his friend's death, and when told of the symptoms said before the servants to Sainfray the notary that it would be necessary to examine the body. An hour later George disappeared, saying nothing to anybody, and not even asking for his wages. Suspicions were excited; but again they remained vague. The autopsy showed a state of things not precisely to be called peculiar to poisoning cases: the intestines, which the fatal poison had not had time to burn as in the case of the d'Aubrays, were marked with reddish spots like flea-bites. In June

1669, Penautier obtained the post that had been held by the Sieur de Saint-Laurent.

But the widow had certain suspicions which were changed into something like certainty by George's flight. A particular circumstance aided and almost confirmed her doubts. An abbé who was a friend of her husband, and knew all about the disappearance of George, met him some days afterwards in the rue des Maçons, near the Sorbonne. They were both on the same side, and a hay-cart coming along the street was causing a block. George raised his head and saw the abbé, knew him as a friend of his late master, stooped under the cart and crawled to the other side, thus at the risk of being crushed escaping from the eyes of a man whose appearance recalled his crime and inspired him with fear of punishment. Madame de Saint-Laurent preferred a charge against George, but though he was sought for everywhere, he could never be found. Still the report of these strange deaths, so sudden and so incomprehensible, was bruited about Paris, and people began to feel frightened. Sainte-Croix, always in the gay world, encountered the talk in drawing-rooms, and began to feel a little uneasy. True, no suspicion pointed as yet in his direction; but it was as well to take precautions, and Sainte-Croix began to consider how he could be freed from anxiety. There was a post in the king's service soon to be

vacant, which would cost 100,000 crowns; and although Sainte-Croix had no apparent means, it was rumoured that he was about to purchase it. He first addressed himself to Belleguise to treat about this affair with Penautier. There was some difficulty, however, to be encountered in this quarter. The sum was a large one, and Penautier no longer required help; he had already come into all the inheritance he looked for, and so he tried to throw cold water on the project.

Sainte-Croix thus wrote to Belleguise:—

"DEAR FRIEND,—Is it possible that you need any more talking to about the matter you know of, so important as it is, and, maybe, able to give us peace and quiet for the rest of our days! I really think the devil must be in it, or else you simply will not be sensible: do show your common sense, my good man, and look at it from all points of view; take it at its very worst, and you still ought to feel bound to serve me, seeing how I have made everything all right for you: all our interests are together in this matter. Do help me, I beg of you; you may feel sure I shall be deeply grateful, and you will never before have acted so agreeably both for me and for yourself. You know quite enough about it, for I have not spoken so openly even to my own brother as I have to you. If you can come this afternoon,

I shall be either at the house or quite near at hand, you know where I mean, or I will expect you to-morrow morning, or I will come and find you, according to what you reply.—Always yours with all my heart."

The house meant by Sainte-Croix was in the rue des Bernardins, and the place near at hand where he was to wait for Belleguise was the room he leased from the widow Brunet, in the blind alley out of the Place Maubert. It was in this room and at the apothecary Glazer's that Sainte-Croix made his experiments; but in accordance with poetical justice, the manipulation of the poisons proved fatal to the workers themselves. The apothecary fell ill and died; Martin was attacked by fearful sickness, which brought him to death's door. Sainte-Croix was unwell, and could not even go out, though he did not know what was the matter. He had a furnace brought round to his house from Glazer's, and ill as he was, went on with the experiments. Sainte-Croix was then seeking to make a poison so subtle that the very effluvia might be fatal. He had heard of the poisoned napkin given to the young dauphin, elder brother of Charles VII, to wipe his hands on during a game of tennis, and knew that the contact had caused his death; and the still discussed tradition had informed him of

the gloves of Jeanne d'Albret; the secret was lost, but Sainte-Croix hoped to recover it. And then there happened one of those strange accidents which seem to be not the hand of chance but a punishment from Heaven. At the very moment when Sainte-Croix was bending over his furnace, watching the fatal preparation as it became hotter and hotter, the glass mask which he wore over his face as a protection from any poisonous exhalations that might rise up from the mixture, suddenly dropped off, and Sainte-Croix dropped to the ground as though felled by a lightning stroke. At supper-time, his wife finding that he did not come out from his closet where he was shut in, knocked at the door, and received no answer; knowing that her husband was wont to busy himself with dark and mysterious matters, she feared some disaster had occurred. She called her servants, who broke in the door. Then she found Sainte-Croix stretched out beside the furnace, the broken glass lying by his side. It was impossible to deceive the public as to the circumstances of this strange and sudden death: the servants had seen the corpse, and they talked. The commissary Picard was ordered to affix the seals, and all the widow could do was to remove the furnace and the fragments of the glass mask.

The noise of the event soon spread all over Paris. Sainte-Croix was extremely well known, and the

news that he was about to purchase a post in the court had made him known even more widely. Lachaussée was one of the first to learn of his master's death; and hearing that a seal had been set upon his room, he hastened to put in an objection in these terms:—

"Objection of Lachaussée, who asserts that for seven years he was in the service of the deceased; that he had given into his charge, two years earlier, 100 pistoles and 100 white crowns, which should be found in a cloth bag under the closet window, and in the same a paper stating that the said sum belonged to him, together with the transfer of 300 livres owed to him by the late M. d'Aubray, councillor; the said transfer made by him at Laserre, together with three receipts from his master of apprenticeship, 100 livres each: these moneys and papers he claims."

To Lachaussée the reply was given that he must wait till the day when the seals were broken, and then if all was as he said, his property would be returned.

But Lachaussée was not the only person who was agitated about the death of Sainte-Croix. The marquise, who was familiar with all the secrets of this fatal closet, had hurried to the commissary as

soon as she heard of the event, and although it was ten o'clock at night had demanded to speak with him. But he had replied by his head clerk, Pierre Frater, that he was in bed; the marquise insisted, begging them to rouse him up, for she wanted a box that she could not allow to have opened. The clerk then went up to the Sieur Picard's bedroom, but came back saying that what the marquise demanded was for the time being an impossibility, for the commissary was asleep. She saw that it was idle to insist, and went away, saying that she should send a man the next morning to fetch the box. In the morning the man came, offering fifty louis to the commissary on behalf of the marquise, if he would give her the box. But he replied that the box was in the sealed room, that it would have to be opened, and that if the objects claimed by the marquise were really hers, they would be safely handed over to her. This reply struck the marquise like a thunderbolt. There was no time to be lost: hastily she removed from the rue Neuve-Saint-Paul, where her town house was, to Picpus, her country place. Thence she posted the same evening to Liège, arriving the next morning, and retired to a convent.

The seals had been set on the 31st of July 1672, and they were taken off on the 8th of August following. Just as they set to work a lawyer charged with full powers of acting for the marquise, ap-

peared and put in the following statement: "Alexandre Delamarre, lawyer acting for the Marquise de Brinvilliers, has come forward, and declares that if in the box claimed by his client there is found a promise signed by her for the sum of 30,000 livres, it is a paper taken from her by fraud, against which, in case of her signature being verified, she intends to lodge an appeal for nullification." This formality over, they proceeded to open Sainte-Croix's closet: the key was handed to the commissary Picard by a Carmelite called Friar Victorin. The commissary opened the door, and entered with the parties interested, the officers, and the widow, and they began by setting aside the loose papers, with a view to taking them in order, one at a time. While they were thus busy, a small roll fell down, on which these two words were written: "My Confession." All present, having no reason to suppose Sainte-Croix a bad man, decided that this paper ought not to be read. The deputy for the attorney-general on being consulted was of this opinion, and the confession of Sainte-Croix was burnt. This act of conscience performed, they proceeded to make an inventory. One of the first objects that attracted the attention of the officers was the box claimed by Madame de Brinvilliers. Her insistence had provoked curiosity, so they began with it. Everybody went near to see what was in it, and it was opened.

We shall let the report speak: in such cases nothing is so effective or so terrible as the official statement.

"In the closet of Sainte-Croix was found a small box one foot square, on the top of which lay a half-sheet of paper entitled 'My Will,' written on one side and containing these words: 'I humbly entreat any into whose hands this chest may fall to do me the kindness of putting it into the hands of Madame the Marquise de Brinvilliers, resident in the rue Neuve-Saint-Paul, seeing that all the contents concern and belong to her alone, and are of no use to any person in the world apart from herself: in case of her being already dead before me, the box and all its contents should be burnt without opening or disturbing anything. And lest anyone should plead ignorance of the contents, I swear by the God I worship and by all that is most sacred that no untruth is here asserted. If anyone should contravene my wishes that are just and reasonable in this matter, I charge their conscience therewith in discharging my own in this world and the next, protesting that such is my last wish.

"'Given at Paris, the 25th of May after noon, 1672. Signed by Sainte-Croix.'

"And below were written these words: 'There is one packet only addressed to M. Penautier which should be delivered.'"

It may be easily understood that a disclosure of this kind only increased the interest of the scene; there was a murmur of curiosity, and when silence again reigned, the official continued in these words:

"A packet has been found sealed in eight different places with eight different seals. On this is written: 'Papers to be burnt in case of my death, of no consequence to anyone. I humbly beg those into whose hands they may fall to burn them. I give this as a charge upon their conscience; all without opening the packet.' In this packet we find two parcels of sublimate.

"*Item,* another packet sealed with six different seals, on which is a similar inscription, in which is found more sublimate, half a pound in weight.

"*Item,* another packet sealed with six different seals, on which is a similar inscription, in which are found three parcels, one containing half an ounce of sublimate, the second 2 1-4 ozs. of Roman vitriol, and the third some calcined prepared vitriol. In the box was found a large square phial, one pint in capacity, full of a clear liquid, which was looked at by M. Moreau, the doctor; he, however, could not tell its nature until it was tested.

"*Item,* another phial, with half a pint of clear liquid with a white sediment, about which Moreau said the same thing as before.

"*Item,* a small earthenware pot containing two or three lumps of prepared opium.

"*Item,* a folded paper containing two drachms of corrosive sublimate powdered.

"Next, a little box containing a sort of stone known as infernal stone.

"Next, a paper containing one ounce of opium.

"Next, a piece of pure antimony weighing three ounces.

"Next, a packet of powder on which was written: 'To check the flow of blood.' Moreau said that it was quince flower and quince buds dried.

"*Item,* a pack sealed with six seals, on which was written, 'Papers to be burnt in case of death.' In this twenty-four letters were found, said to have been written by the Marquise de Brinvilliers.

"*Item,* another packet sealed with six seals, on which a similar inscription was written. In this were twenty-seven pieces of paper on each of which was written: 'Sundry curious secrets.'

"*Item,* another packet with six more seals, on which a similar inscription was written. In this were found seventy-five livres, addressed to different persons. Besides all these, in the box there were two bonds, one from the marquise for 30,000, and one from Penautier for 10,000 francs, their dates corresponding to the time of the deaths of M. d'Aubray and the Sieur de St. Laurent."

The difference in the amount shows that Sainte-Croix had a tariff, and that parricide was more expensive than simple assassination. Thus in his death did Sainte-Croix bequeath the poisons to his mistress and his friend; not content with his own crimes in the past, he wished to be their accomplice in the future.

The first business of the officials was to submit the different substances to analysis, and to experiment with them on animals. The report follows of Guy Simon, an apothecary, who was charged to undertake the analysis and the experiments:—

"This artificial poison reveals its nature on examination. It is so disguised that one fails to recognise it, so subtle that it deceives the scientific, so elusive that it escapes the doctor's eye: experiments seem to be at fault with this poison, rules useless, aphorisms ridiculous. The surest experiments are made by the use of the elements or upon animals. In water, ordinary poison falls by its own weight. The water is superior, the poison obeys, falls downwards, and takes the lower place.

"The trial by fire is no less certain: the fire evaporates and disperses all that is innocent and pure, leaving only acrid and sour matter which resists its influence. The effect produced by poisons on animals is still more plain to see: its malignity extends to every part that it reaches, and all that it touches

is vitiated; it burns and scorches all the inner parts with a strange, irresistible fire.

"The poison employed by Sainte-Croix has been tried in all the ways, and can defy every experiment. This poison floats in water, it is the superior, and the water obeys it; it escapes in the trial by fire, leaving behind only innocent deposits; in animals it is so skilfully concealed that no one could detect it; all parts of the animal remain healthy and active; even while it is spreading the cause of death, this artificial poison leaves behind the marks and appearance of life. Every sort of experiment has been tried. The first was to pour out several drops of the liquid found into oil of tartar and sea water, and nothing was precipitated into the vessels used; the second was to pour the same liquid into a sanded vessel, and at the bottom there was found nothing acrid or acid to the tongue, scarcely any stains; the third experiment was tried upon an Indian fowl, a pigeon, a dog, and some other animals, which died soon after. When they were opened, however, nothing was found but a little coagulated blood in the ventricle of the heart. Another experiment was giving a white powder to a cat, in a morsel of mutton. The cat vomited for half an hour, and was found dead the next day, but when opened no part of it was found to be affected by the poison. A second trial of the same poison was made upon a

pigeon, which soon died. When opened, nothing peculiar was found except a little reddish water in the stomach."

These experiments proved that Sainte-Croix was a learned chemist, and suggested the idea that he did not employ his art for nothing; everybody recalled the sudden, unexpected deaths that had occurred, and the bonds from the marquise and from Penautier looked like blood-money. As one of these two was absent, and the other so powerful and rich that they dared not arrest him without proofs, attention was now paid to the objection put in by Lachaussée.

It was said in the objection that Lachaussée had spent seven years in the service of Sainte-Croix, so he could not have considered the time he had passed with the d'Aubrays as an interruption to this service. The bag containing the thousand pistoles and the three bonds for a hundred livres had been found in the place indicated; thus Lachaussée had a thorough knowledge of this closet: if he knew the closet, he would know about the box; if he knew about the box, he could not be an innocent man. This was enough to induce Madame Mangot de Villarceaux, the lieutenant's widow, to lodge an accusation against him, and in consequence a writ was issued against Lachaussée, and he was arrested.

When this happened, poison was found upon him. The trial came on before the Châtelet. Lachaussée denied his guilt obstinately. The judges thinking they had no sufficient proof, ordered the preparatory question to be applied. Mme. Mangot appealed from a judgment which would probably save[1] the culprit if he had the strength to resist the torture and own to nothing; so, in virtue of this appeal, a judgment, on March 4th, 1673, declared that Jean Amelin Lachaussée was convicted of having poisoned the lieutenant and the councillor; for which he was to be broken alive on the wheel, having been first subjected to the question both ordinary and extraordinary, with a view to the discovery of his accomplices. At the same time Madame de Brinvilliers was condemned in default of appearance to have her head cut off.

Lachaussée suffered the torture of the boot. This was having each leg fastened between two planks and drawn together in an iron ring, after which wedges were driven in between the middle planks; the ordinary question was with four wedges, the extraordinary with eight. At the third wedge Lachaussée said he was ready to speak; so the ques-

[1] There were two kinds of question, one before and one after the sentence was passed. In the first, an accused person would endure frightful torture in the hope of saving his life, and so would often confess nothing. In the second, there was no hope, and therefore it was not worth while to suffer additional pains.

tion was stopped, and he was carried into the choir of the chapel stretched on a mattress, where, in a weak voice—for he could hardly speak—he begged for half an hour to recover himself. We give a verbatim extract from the report of the question and the execution of the death-sentence:—

"Lachaussée, released from the question and laid on the mattress, the official reporter retired. Half an hour later Lachaussée begged that he might return, and said that he was guilty; that Sainte-Croix told him that Madame de Brinvilliers had given him the poison to administer to her brothers; that he had done it in water and soup, had put the reddish water in the lieutenant's glass in Paris, and the clear water in the pie at Villequoy; that Sainte-Croix had promised to keep him always, and to make him a gift of 100 pistolets; that he gave him an account of the effect of the poisons, and that Sainte-Croix had given him some of the waters several times. Sainte-Croix told him that the marquise knew nothing of his other poisonings, but Lachaussée thought she did know, because she had often spoken to him about his poisons; that she wanted to compel him to go away, offering him money if he would go; that she had asked him for the box and its contents; that if Sainte-Croix had been able to put anyone into the service of Madame d'Aubray, the

lieutenant's widow, he would possibly have had her poisoned also; for he had a fancy for her daughter."

This declaration, which left no room for doubt, led to the judgment that came next, thus described in the Parliamentary register: "Report of the question and execution on the 24th of March 1673, containing the declarations and confessions of Jean Amelin Lachaussée; the court has ordered that the persons mentioned, Belleguise, Martin, Poitevin, Olivier, Veron père, the wife of Quesdon the wig-maker, be summoned to appear before the court to be interrogated and heard concerning matters arising from the present inquiry, and orders that the decree of arrest against Lapierre and summons against Penautier decreed by the criminal lieutenant shall be carried out. In Parliament, 27th March 1673." In virtue of this judgment, Penautier, Martin, and Belleguise were interrogated on the 21st, 22nd, and 24th of April. On the 26th of July, Penautier was discharged; fuller information was desired concerning Belleguise, and the arrest of Martin was ordered. On the 24th of March, Lachaussée had been broken on the wheel. As to Exili, the beginner of it all, he had disappeared like Mephistopheles after Faust's end, and nothing was heard of him. Towards the end of the year

Martin was released for want of sufficient evidence. But the Marquise de Brinvilliers remained at Liège, and although she was shut up in a convent she had by no means abandoned one, at any rate, of the most worldly pleasures. She had soon found consolation for the death of Sainte-Croix, whom, all the same, she had loved so much as to be willing to kill herself for his sake. But she had adopted a new lover, Théria by name. About this man it has been impossible to get any information, except that his name was several times mentioned during the trial. Thus, all the accusations had, one by one, fallen upon her, and it was resolved to seek her out in the retreat where she was supposed to be safe. The mission was difficult and very delicate. Desgrais, one of the cleverest of the officials, offered to undertake it. He was a handsome man, thirty-six years old or thereabouts: nothing in his looks betrayed his connection with the police; he wore any kind of dress with equal ease and grace, and was familiar with every grade in the social scale, disguising himself as a wretched tramp or a noble lord. He was just the right man, so his offer was accepted.

He started accordingly for Liège, escorted by several archers, and, fortified by a letter from the king addressed to the Sixty of that town, wherein Louis XIV demanded the guilty woman to be given up for punishment. After examining the letter,

which Desgrais had taken pains to procure, the council authorised the extradition of the marquise.

This was much, but it was not all. The marquise, as we know, had taken refuge in a convent, where Desgrais dared not arrest her by force, for two reasons: first, because she might get information beforehand, and hide herself in one of the cloister retreats whose secret is known only to the superior; secondly, because Liège was so religious a town that the event would produce a great sensation: the act might be looked upon as a sacrilege, and might bring about a popular rising, during which the marquise might possibly contrive to escape. So Desgrais paid a visit to his wardrobe, and feeling that an abbé's dress would best free him from suspicion, he appeared at the doors of the convent in the guise of a fellow-countryman just returned from Rome, unwilling to pass through Liège without presenting his compliments to the lovely and unfortunate marquise. Desgrais had just the manner of the younger son of a great house: he was as flattering as a courtier, as enterprising as a musketeer. In this first visit he made himself attractive by his wit and his audacity, so much so that more easily than he had dared to hope, he got leave to pay a second call. The second visit was not long delayed: Desgrais presented himself the very next day. Such eagerness was flattering to the mar-

quise, so Desgrais was received even better than the night before. She, a woman of rank and fashion, for more than a year had been robbed of all intercourse with people of a certain set, so with Desgrais the marquise resumed her Parisian manner. Unhappily the charming abbé was to leave Liège in a few days; and on that account he became all the more pressing, and a third visit, to take place next day, was formally arranged. Desgrais was punctual: the marquise was impatiently waiting him; but by a conjunction of circumstances that Desgrais had no doubt arranged beforehand, the amorous meeting was disturbed two or three times just as they were getting more intimate and least wanting to be observed. Desgrais complained of these tiresome checks; besides, the marquise and he too would be compromised: he owed concealment to his cloth. He begged her to grant him a rendezvous outside the town, in some deserted walk, where there would be no fear of their being recognised or followed: the marquise hesitated no longer than would serve to put a price on the favour she was granting, and the rendezvous was fixed for the same evening.

The evening came: both waited with the same impatience, but with very different hopes. The marquise found Desgrais at the appointed spot: he gave her his arm then holding her hand in his own,

he gave a sign, the archers appeared, the lover threw off his mask, Desgrais was confessed, and the marquise was his prisoner. Desgrais left her in the hands of his men, and hastily made his way to the convent. Then, and not before, he produced his order from the Sixty, by means of which he opened the marquise's room. Under her bed he found a box, which he seized and sealed; then he went back to her, and gave the order to start.

When the marquise saw the box in the hands of Desgrais, she at first appeared stunned; quickly recovering, she claimed a paper inside it which contained her confession. Desgrais refused, and as he turned round for the carriage to come forward, she tried to choke herself by swallowing a pin. One of the archers, called Claude Rolla, perceiving her intention, contrived to get the pin out of her mouth. After this, Desgrais commanded that she should be doubly watched.

They stopped for supper. An archer called Antoine Barbier was present at the meal, and watched so that no knife or fork should be put on the table, or any instrument with which she could wound or kill herself. The marquise, as she put her glass to her mouth as though to drink, broke a little bit off with her teeth; but the archer saw it in time, and forced her to put it out on her plate. Then she promised him, if he would save her, that she would

make his fortune. He asked what he would have to do for that. She proposed that he should cut Desgrais' throat; but he refused, saying that he was at her service in any other way. So she asked him for pen and paper, and wrote this letter:—

"Dear Théria,—I am in the hands of Desgrais, who is taking me by road from Liège to Paris. Come quickly and save me."

Antoine Barbier took the letter, promising to deliver it at the right address; but he gave it to Desgrais instead. The next day, finding that this letter had not been pressing enough, she wrote him another, saying that the escort was only eight men, who could be easily overcome by four or five determined assailants, and she counted on him to strike this bold stroke. But, uneasy when she got no answer and no result from her letters, she despatched a third missive to Théria. In this she implored him by his own salvation, if he were not strong enough to attack her escort and save her, at least to kill two of the four horses by which she was conveyed, and to profit by the moment of confusion to seize the chest and throw it into the fire; otherwise, she declared, she was lost. Though Théria received none of these letters, which were one by one handed over by Barbier to Desgrais, he all the same did go to

Maestricht, where the marquise was to pass, of his own accord. There he tried to bribe the archers, offering as much as 10,000 livres, but they were incorruptible. At Rocroy the cortège met M. Palluau, the councillor, whom the Parliament had sent after the prisoner, that he might put questions to her at a time when she least expected them, and so would not have prepared her answers. Desgrais told him all that had passed, and specially called his attention to the famous box, the object of so much anxiety and so many eager instructions. M. de Palluau opened it, and found among other things a paper headed "My Confession." This confession was a proof that the guilty feel great need of discovering their crimes either to mankind or to a merciful God. Sainte-Croix, we know, had made a confession that was burnt, and here was the marquise equally imprudent. The confession contained seven articles, and began thus, "I confess to God, and to you, my father," and was a complete avowal of all the crimes she had committed.

In the first article she accused herself of incendiarism;

In the second, of having ceased to be a virgin at seven years of age;

In the third of having poisoned her father;

In the fourth, of having poisoned her two brothers;

In the fifth, that she had tried to poison her sister, a Carmelite nun.

The two other articles were concerned with the description of strange and unnatural sins. In this woman there was something of Locusta and something of Messalina as well: antiquity could go no further.

M. de Palluau, fortified by his knowledge of this important document, began his examination forthwith. We give it verbatim, rejoicing that we may substitute an official report for our own narrative.

Asked why she fled to Liège, she replied that she left France on account of some business with her sister-in-law.

Asked if she had any knowledge of the papers found in the box, she replied that in the box there were several family papers, and among them a general confession which she desired to make; when she wrote it, however, her mind was disordered; she knew not what she had said or done, being distraught at the time, in a foreign country, deserted by her relatives, forced to borrow every penny.

Asked as to the first article, what house it was she had burnt, she replied that she had not burnt anything, but when she wrote that she was out of her senses.

Asked about the six other articles she replied that she had no recollection of them.

Asked if she had not poisoned her father and brothers, she replied that she knew nothing at all about it.

Asked if it were not Lachaussée who poisoned her brothers, she replied that she knew nothing about it.

Asked if she did not know that her sister could not live long, having been poisoned, she said that she expected her sister to die, because she suffered in the same way as her brothers; that she had lost all memory of the time when she wrote this confession; admitted that she left France by the advice of her relations.

Asked why her relations had advised her thus, she replied that it was in connection with her brothers' affairs; admitted seeing Sainte-Croix since his release from the Bastille.

Asked if Sainte-Croix had not persuaded her to get rid of her father, she replied that she could not remember; neither did she remember if Sainte-Croix had given her powders or other drugs, nor if Sainte-Croix had told her he knew how to make her rich.

Eight letters having been produced, asked to whom she had written them, she replied that she did not remember.

Asked why she had promised to pay 30,000 livres to Sainte-Croix, she replied that she intended to

entrust this sum to his care, so that she might make use of it when she wanted it, believing him to be her friend; she had not wished this to be known, by reason of her creditors; that she had an acknowledgment from Sainte-Croix, but had lost it in her travels; that her husband knew nothing about it.

Asked if the promise was made before or after the death of her brothers, she replied that she could not remember, and it made no difference.

Asked if she knew an apothecary called Glazer, she replied that she had consulted him three times about inflammation.

Asked why she wrote to Théria to get hold of the box, she replied that she did not understand.

Asked why, in writing to Théria, she had said she was lost unless he got hold of the box, she replied that she could not remember.

Asked if she had seen during the journey with her father the first symptoms of his malady, she replied that she had not noticed that her father was ill on the journey, either going or coming back in 1666.

Asked if she had not done business with Penautier, she replied that Penautier owed her 30,000 livres.

Asked how this was, she replied that she and her husband had lent Penautier 10,000 crowns, that

he had paid it back, and since then they had had no dealings with him.

The marquise took refuge, we see, in a complete system of denial: arrived in Paris, and confined in the Conciergerie, she did the same; but soon other terrible charges were added, which still further overwhelmed her.

The sergeant Cluet deposed: that, observing a lackey to M. d'Aubray, the councillor, to be the man Lachaussée, whom he had seen in the service of Sainte-Croix, he said to the marquise that if her brother knew that Lachaussée had been with Sainte-Croix he would not like it, but that Madame de Brinvilliers exclaimed, "Dear me, don't tell my brothers; they would give him a thrashing, no doubt, and he may just as well get his wages as anybody else." He said nothing to the d'Aubrays, though he saw Lachaussée paying daily visits to Sainte-Croix and to the marquise, who was worrying Sainte-Croix to let her have her box, and wanted her bill for two or three thousand pistoles. Otherwise, she would have had him assassinated. She often said that she was very anxious that no one should see the contents of the box; that it was a very important matter, but only concerned herself. After the box was opened, the witness added, he had told the marquise that the commissary Picard said to Lachaussée that there were strange things in it;

but the lady blushed, and changed the subject. He asked her if she were not an accomplice. She said, "What! I?" but then muttered to herself: "Lachaussée ought to be sent off to Picardy." The witness repeated that she had been after Sainte-Croix a long time about the box, and if she had got it she would have had his throat cut. The witness further said that when he told Briancourt that Lachaussée was taken and would doubtless confess all, Briancourt, speaking of the marquise, remarked, "She is a lost woman." That d'Aubray's daughter had called Briancourt a rogue, but Briancourt had replied that she little knew what obligations she was under to him; that they had wanted to poison both her and the lieutenant's widow, and he alone had hindered it. He had heard from Briancourt that the marquise had often said that there are means to get rid of people one dislikes, and they can easily be put an end to in a bowl of soup.

The girl Edme Huet, a woman of Brescia, deposed that Sainte-Croix went to see the marquise every day, and that in a box belonging to that lady she had seen two little packets containing sublimate in powder and in paste: she recognised these, because she was an apothecary's daughter. She added that one day Madame de Brinvilliers, after a dinner party, in a merry mood, said, showing her a little box, "Here is vengeance on one's enemies: this box

is small, but holds plenty of successsions!" That she gave back the box into her hands, but soon changing from her sprightly mood, she cried, "Good heavens, what have I said? Tell nobody." That Lambert, clerk at the palace, told her he had brought the packets to Madame from Sainte-Croix; that Lachaussée often went to see her; and that she herself, not being paid ten pistoles which the marquise owed her, went to complain to Sainte-Croix, threatening to tell the lieutenant what she had seen; and accordingly the ten pistoles were paid; further, that the marquise and Sainte-Croix always kept poison about them, to make use of, in case of being arrested.

Laurent Perrette, living with Glazer, said that he had often seen a lady call on his mistress with Sainte-Croix; that the footman told him she was the Marquise de Brinvilliers; that he would wager his head on it that they came to Glazer's to make poison; that when they came they used to leave their carriage at the Foire Saint-Germain.

Marie de Villeray, maid to the marquise, deposed that after the death of M. d'Aubray the councillor, Lachaussée came to see the lady and spoke with her in private; that Briancourt said she had caused the death of worthy men; that Briancourt every day took some electuary for fear of being poisoned, and it was no doubt due to this precaution that he

was still alive; but he feared he would be stabbed, because she had told him the secret about the poisoning; that d'Aubray's daughter had to be warned; and that there was a similar design against the tutor of M. de Brinvillier's children. Marie de Villeray added that two days after the death of the councillor, when Lachaussée was in Madame's bedroom, Cousté, the late lieutenant's secretary, was announced, and Lachaussée had to be hidden in the alcove by the bed. Lachaussée brought the marquise a letter from Sainte-Croix.

François Desgrais, officer, deposed that when he was given the king's orders he arrested the marquise at Liège; that he found under her bed a box which he sealed; that the lady had demanded a paper which was in it, containing her confession, but he refused it; that on the road to Paris the marquise had told him that she believed it was Glazer who made the poisons for Sainte-Croix; that Sainte-Croix, who had made a rendezvous with her one day at the cross Saint-Honoré, there showed her four little bottles, saying, "See what Glazer has sent me." She asked him for one, but Sainte-Croix said he would rather die than give it up. He added that the archer Antoine Barbier had given him three letters written by the marquise to Théria; that in the first she had told him to come at once and snatch her from the hands of the soldiers; that in the sec-

ond she said that the escort was only composed of eight persons, who could be worsted by five men; that in the third she said that if he could not save her from the men who were taking her away, he should at least approach the commissary, and killing his valet's horse and two other horses in his carriage, then take the box, and burn it; otherwise she was lost.

Laviolette, an archer, deposed that on the evening of the arrest the marquise had a long pin and tried to put it in her mouth; that he stopped her, and told her that she was very wicked; that he perceived that people said the truth and that she had poisoned all her family; to which she replied, that if she had, it was only through following bad advice, and that one could not always be good.

Antoine Barbier, an archer, said that the marquise at table took up a glass as though to drink, and tried to swallow a piece of it; that he prevented this, and she promised to make his fortune if only he would save her; that she wrote several letters to Théria; that during the whole journey she tried all she could to swallow pins, bits of glass, and earth; that she had proposed that he should cut Desgrais' throat, and kill the commissary's valet; that she had bidden him get the box and burn it, and bring a lighted torch to burn everything; that she had written to Penautier from the Conciergerie; that

she gave him the letter, and he pretended to deliver it.

Finally, Françoise Roussel deposed that she had been in the service of the marquise, and the lady had one day given her some preserved gooseberries; that she had eaten some on the point of her knife, and at once felt ill. She also gave her a slice of mutton, rather wet, which she ate, afterwards suffering great pain in the stomach, feeling as though she had been pricked in the heart, and for three years had felt the same, believing herself poisoned.

It was difficult to continue a system of absolute denial in face of proofs like these. The marquise persisted, all the same, that she was in no way guilty; and Maître Nivelle, one of the best lawyers of the period, consented to defend her cause.

He combated one charge after another, in a remarkably clever way, owning to the adulterous connection of the marquise with Sainte-Croix, but denying her participation in the murders of the d'Aubrays, father and sons: these he ascribed entirely to the vengeance desired by Sainte-Croix. As to the confession, the strongest and, he maintained, the only evidence against Madame de Brinvilliers, he attacked its validity by bringing forward certain similar cases, where the evidence supplied by the accused against themselves had not been admitted by reason of the legal action: *Non auditur*

perire volens. He cited three instances, and as they are themselves interesting, we copy them verbatim from his notes.

First Case

Dominicus Soto, a very famous canonist and theologian, confessor to Charles v, present at the first meetings of the Council of Trent under Paul III, propounds a question about a man who had lost a paper on which he had written down his sins. It happened that this paper fell into the hands of an ecclesiastical judge, who wished to put in information against the writer on the strength of this document. Now this judge was justly punished by his superior, because confession is so sacred that even that which is destined to constitute the confession should be wrapped in eternal silence. In accordance with this precedent, the following judgment, reported in the *Traité des Confesseurs,* was given by Roderic Acugno. A Catalonian, native of Barcelona, who was condemned to death for homicide and owned his guilt, refused to confess when the hour of punishment arrived. However strongly pressed, he resisted, and so violently, giving no reason, that all were persuaded that his mind was unhinged by the fear of death. Saint-Thomas of Villeneuve, Archbishop of Valencia, heard of his obstinacy. Valencia was the place where his sen-

tence was given. The worthy prelate was so charitable as to try to persuade the criminal to make his confession, so as not to lose his soul as well as his body. Great was his surprise, when he asked the reason of the refusal, to hear the doomed man declare that he hated confessors, because he had been condemned through the treachery of his own priest, who was the only person who knew about the murder. In confession he had admitted his crime and said where the body was buried, and all about it; his confessor had revealed it all, and he could not deny it, and so he had been condemned. He had only just learned, what he did not know at the time he confessed, that his confessor was the brother of the man he had killed, and that the desire for vengeance had prompted the bad priest to betray his confession. Saint-Thomas, hearing this, thought that this incident was of more importance than the trial, which concerned the life of only one person, whereas the honour of religion was at stake, with consequences infinitely more important. He felt he must verify this statement, and summoned the confessor. When he had admitted the breach of faith, the judges were obliged to revoke their sentence and pardon the criminal, much to the gratification of the public mind. The confessor was adjudged a very severe penance, which Saint-Thomas modified because of his prompt avowal of his fault,

and still more because he had given an opportunity for the public exhibition of that reverence which judges themselves are bound to pay to confessions.

Second Case

In 1579 an innkeeper at Toulouse killed with his own hand, unknown to the inmates of his house, a stranger who had come to lodge with him, and buried him secretly in the cellar. The wretch then suffered from remorse, and confessed the crime with all its circumstances, telling his confessor where the body was buried. The relations of the dead man, after making all possible search to get news of him, at last proclaimed through the town a large reward to be given to anyone who would discover what had happened to him. The confessor, tempted by this bait, secretly gave word that they had only to search in the innkeeper's cellar and they would find the corpse. And they found it in the place indicated. The innkeeper was thrown into prison, was tortured, and confessed his crime. But afterwards he always maintained that his confessor was the only person who could have betrayed him. Then the Parliament, indignant with such means of finding out the truth, declared him innocent, failing other proof than what came through his confessor. The con-

fessor was himself condemned to be hanged, and his body was burnt. So fully did the tribunal in its wisdom recognise the importance of securing the sanctity of a sacrament that is indispensable to salvation.

Third Case

An Armenian woman had inspired a violent passion in a young Turkish gentleman, but her prudence was long an obstacle to her lover's desires. At last he went beyond all bounds, and threatened to kill both her and her husband if she refused to gratify him. Frightened by this threat, which she knew too well he would carry out, she feigned consent, and gave the Turk a rendezvous at her house at an hour when she said her husband would be absent; but by arrangement the husband arrived, and although the Turk was armed with a sabre and a pair of pistols, it so befell that they were fortunate enough to kill their enemy, whom they buried under their dwelling unknown to all the world. But some days after the event they went to confess to a priest of their nation, and revealed every detail of the tragic story. This unworthy minister of the Lord supposed that in a Mahommedan country, where the laws of the priesthood and the functions of a confessor are either unknown or disapproved, no

examination would be made into the source of his information, and that his evidence would have the same weight as any other accuser's. So he resolved to make a profit and gratify his own avarice. Several times he visited the husband and wife, always borrowing considerable sums, and threatening to reveal their crime if they refused him. The first few times the poor creatures gave in to his exactions; but the moment came at last when, robbed of all their fortune, they were obliged to refuse the sum he demanded. Faithful to his threat, the priest, with a view to more reward, at once denounced them to the dead man's father. He, who had adored his son, went to the vizier, told him he had identified the murderers through their confessor, and asked for justice. But this denunciation had by no means the desired effect. The vizier, on the contrary, felt deep pity for the wretched Armenians, and indignation against the priest who had betrayed them. He put the accuser into a room which adjoined the court, and sent for the Armenian bishop to ask what confession really was, and what punishment was deserved by a priest who betrayed it, and what was the fate of those whose crimes were made known in this fashion. The bishop replied that the secrets of confession are inviolable, that Christians burn the priest who reveals them, and absolve those whom he accuses,

because the avowal made by the guilty to the priest is proscribed by the Christian religion, on pain of eternal damnation. The vizier, satisfied with the answer, took the bishop into another room, and summoned the accused to declare all the circumstances: the poor wretches, half dead, fell at the vizier's feet. The woman spoke, explaining that the necessity of defending life and honour had driven them to take up arms to kill their enemy. She added that God alone had witnessed their crime, and it would still be unknown had not the law of the same God compelled them to confide it to the ear of one of His ministers for their forgiveness. Now the priest's insatiable avarice had ruined them first and then denounced them. The vizier made them go into a third room, and ordered the treacherous priest to be confronted with the bishop, making him again rehearse the penalties incurred by those who betray confessions. Then, applying this to the guilty priest, he condemned him to be burnt alive in a public place;—in anticipation, said he, of burning in hell, where he would assuredly receive the punishment of his infidelity and crimes. The sentence was executed without delay.

In spite of the effect which the advocate intended to produce by these three cases, either the judges rejected them, or perhaps they thought the other

evidence without the confession was enough, and it was soon clear to everyone, by the way the trial went forward, that the marquise would be condemned. Indeed, before sentence was pronounced, on the morning of July 16th, 1676, she saw M. Pirot, doctor of the Sorbonne, come into her prison, sent by the chief president. This worthy magistrate, foreseeing the issue, and feeling that one so guilty should not be left till the last moment, had sent the good priest. The latter, although he had objected that the Conciergerie had its own two chaplains, and added that he was too feeble to undertake such a task, being unable even to see another man bled without feeling ill, accepted the painful mission, the president having so strongly urged it, on the ground that in this case he needed a man who could be entirely trusted. The president, in fact, declared that, accustomed as he was to dealing with criminals, the strength of the marquise amazed him. The day before he summoned M. Pirot, he had worked at the trial from morning to night, and for thirteen hours the accused had been confronted with Briancourt, one of the chief witnesses against her. On that very day, there had been five hours more, and she had borne it all, showing as much respect towards her judges as haughtiness towards the witness, reproaching him as a miserable valet, given to drink, and protesting that as he had been dis-

missed for his misdemeanours, his testimony against her ought to go for nothing. So the chief president felt no hope of breaking her inflexible spirit, except by the agency of a minister of religion; for it was not enough to put her to death, the poisons must perish with her, or else society would gain nothing. The doctor Pirot came to the marquise with a letter from her sister, who, as we know, was a nun bearing the name of Sister Marie at the convent Saint-Jacques. Her letter exhorted the marquise, in the most touching and affectionate terms, to place her confidence in the good priest, and look upon him not only as a helper but as a friend.

When M. Pirot came before the marquise, she had just left the dock, where she had been for three hours without confessing anything, or seeming in the least touched by what the president said, though he, after acting the part of judge, addressed her simply as a Christian, and showing her what her deplorable position was, appearing now for the last time before men, and destined so soon to appear before God, spoke to her such moving words that he broke down himself, and the oldest and most obdurate judges present wept when they heard him. When the marquise perceived the doctor, suspecting that her trial was leading her to death, she approached him, saying—

"You have come, sir, because——"

But Father Chavigny, who was with M. Pirot, interrupted her, saying—

" Madame, we will begin with a prayer."

They all fell on their knees invoking the Holy Spirit; then the marquise asked them to add a prayer to the Virgin, and, this prayer finished, she went up to the doctor, and, beginning afresh, said:

" Sir, no doubt the president has sent you to give me consolation: with you I am to pass the little life I have left. I have long been eager to see you."

" Madame," the doctor replied, " I come to render you any spiritual office that I can; I only wish it were on another occasion."

" We must have resolution, sir," said she, smiling, " for all things."

Then turning to Father Chavigny, she said—

" My father, I am very grateful to you for bringing the doctor here, and for all the other visits you have been willing to pay me. Pray to God for me, I entreat you; henceforth I shall speak with no one but the doctor, for with him I must speak of things that can only be discussed *tête-à-tête*. Farewell, then, my father; God will reward you for the attention you have been willing to bestow upon me."

With these words the father retired, leaving the marquise alone with the doctor and the two men and one woman always in attendance on her. They were in a large room in the Montgomery tower

extending throughout its whole length. There was at the end of the room a bed with grey curtains for the lady, and a folding-bed for the custodian. It is said to have been the same room where the poet Théophile was once shut up, and near the door there were still verses in his well-known style written by his hand.

As soon as the two men and the woman saw for what the doctor had come, they retired to the end of the room, leaving the marquise free to ask for and receive the consolations brought her by the man of God. Then the two sat at a table side by side. The marquise thought she was already condemned, and began to speak on that assumption; but the doctor told her that sentence was not yet given, and he did not know precisely when it would be, still less what it would be; but at these words the marquise interrupted him.

"Sir," she said, "I am not troubled about the future. If my sentence is not given yet, it soon will be. I expect the news this morning, and I know it will be death: the only grace I look for from the president is a delay between the sentence and its execution; for if I were executed to-day I should have very little time to prepare, and I feel I have need for more."

The doctor did not expect such words, so he was overjoyed to learn what she felt. In addition to what

the president had said, he had heard from Father Chavigny that he had told her the Sunday before that it was very unlikely she would escape death, and indeed, so far as one could judge by reports in the town, it was a foregone conclusion. When he said so, at first she had appeared stunned, and said with an air of great terror, "Father, must I die?" And when he tried to speak words of consolation, she had risen and shaken her head, proudly replying—

"No, no, father; there is no need to encourage me. I will play my part, and that at once: I shall know how to die like a woman of spirit."

Then the father had told her that we cannot prepare for death so quickly and so easily, and that we have to be in readiness for a long time, not to be taken by surprise; and she had replied that she needed but a quarter of an hour to confess in, and one moment to die.

So the doctor was very glad to find that between Sunday and Thursday her feelings had changed so much.

"Yes," said she, "the more I reflect the more I feel that one day would not be enough to prepare myself for God's tribunal, to be judged by Him after men have judged me."

"Madame," replied the doctor, "I do not know what or when your sentence will be; but should it be

death, and given to-day, I may venture to promise you that it will not be carried out before to-morrow. But although death is as yet uncertain, I think it well that you should be prepared for any event."

"Oh, my death is quite certain," said she, "and I must not give way to useless hopes. I must repose in you the great secrets of my whole life; but, father, before this opening of my heart, let me hear from your lips the opinion you have formed of me, and what you think in my present state I ought to do."

"You perceive my plan," said the doctor, "and you anticipate what I was about to say. Before entering into the secrets of your conscience, before opening the discussion of your affairs with God, I am ready, madame, to give you certain definite rules. I do not yet know whether you are guilty at all, and I suspend my judgment as to all the crimes you are accused of, since of them I can learn nothing except through your confession. Thus it is my duty still to doubt your guilt. But I cannot be ignorant of what you are accused of: this is a public matter, and has reached my ears; for, as you may imagine, madame, your affairs have made a great stir, and there are few people who know nothing about them."

"Yes," she said, smiling, "I know there has

been a great deal of talk, and I am in every man's mouth."

"Then," replied the doctor, "the crime you are accused of is poisoning. If you are guilty, as is believed, you cannot hope that God will pardon you unless you make known to your judges what the poison is, what is its composition and what its antidote, also the names of your accomplices. Madame, we must lay hands on all these evil-doers without exception; for if you spared them, they would be able to make use of your poison, and you would then be guilty of all the murders committed by them after your death, because you did not give them over to the judges during your life; thus one might say you survive yourself, for your crime survives you. You know, madame, that a sin in the moment of death is never pardoned, and that to get remission for your crimes, if crimes you have, they must die when you die: for if you slay them not, be very sure they will slay you."

"Yes, I am sure of that," replied the marquise, after a moment of silent thought; "and though I will not admit that I am guilty, I promise, if I am guilty, to weigh your words. But one question, sir, and pray take heed that an answer is necessary. Is there not crime in this world that is beyond pardon? Are not some people guilty of sins so terrible and so numerous that the Church dares not pardon them,

and if God, in His Justice, takes account of them, He cannot for all His mercy pardon them? See, I begin with this question, because, if I am to have no hope, it is needless for me to confess."

"I wish to think, madame," replied the doctor, in spite of himself half frightened at the marquise, "that this your first question is only put by way of a general thesis, and has nothing to do with your own state. I shall answer the question without any personal application. No, madame, in this life there are no unpardonable sinners, terrible and numerous howsoever their sins may be. This is an article of faith, and without holding it you could not die a good Catholic. Some doctors, it is true, have before now maintained the contrary, but they have been condemned as heretics. Only despair and final impenitence are unpardonable, and they are not sins of our life but in our death."

"Sir," replied the marquise, "God has given me grace to be convinced by what you say, and I believe He will pardon all sins—that He has often exercised this power. Now all my trouble is that He may not deign to grant all His goodness to one so wretched as I am, a creature so unworthy of the favours already bestowed on her."

The doctor reassured her as best he could, and began to examine her attentively as they conversed together. "She was," he said, "a woman naturally

courageous and fearless; naturally gentle and good; not easily excited; clever and penetrating, seeing things very clearly in her mind, and expressing herself well and in few but careful words; easily finding a way out of a difficulty, and choosing her line of conduct in the most embarrassing circumstances; light-minded and fickle; unstable, paying no attention if the same thing were said several times over. For this reason," continued the doctor, "I was obliged to alter what I had to say from time to time, keeping her but a short time to one subject, to which, however, I would return later, giving the matter a new appearance and disguising it a little. She spoke little and well, with no sign of learning and no affectation, always mistress of herself, always composed and saying just what she intended to say. No one would have supposed from her face or from her conversation that she was so wicked as she must have been, judging by her public avowal of the parricide. It is surprising, therefore—and one must bow down before the judgment of God when He leaves mankind to himself—that a mind evidently of some grandeur, professing fearlessness in the most untoward and unexpected events, an immovable firmness and a resolution to await and to endure death if so it must be, should yet be so criminal as she was proved to be by the parricide to which she confessed before her judges. She had

nothing in her face that would indicate such evil. She had very abundant chestnut hair, a rounded, well-shaped face, blue eyes very pretty and gentle, extraordinarily white skin, good nose, and no disagreeable feature. Still, there was nothing unusually attractive in the face: already she was a little wrinkled, and looked older than her age. Something made me ask at our first interview how old she was. 'Monsieur,' she said, "if I were to live till Sainte-Madeleine's day I should be forty-six. On her day I came into the world, and I bear her name. I was christened Marie-Madeleine. But near to the day as we now are, I shall not live so long: I must end to-day, or at latest to-morrow, and it will be a favour to give me the one day. For this kindness I rely on your word.' Anyone would have thought she was quite forty-eight. Though her face as a rule looked so gentle, whenever an unhappy thought crossed her mind she showed it by a contortion that frightened one at first, and from time to time I saw her face twitching with anger, scorn, or ill-will. I forgot to say that she was very little and thin. Such is, roughly given, a description of her body and mind, which I very soon came to know, taking pains from the first to observe her, so as to lose no time in acting on what I discovered."

As she was giving a first brief sketch of her life to her confessor, the marquise remembered that he

had not yet said mass, and reminded him herself that it was time to do so, pointing out to him the chapel of the Conciergerie. She begged him to say a mass for her and in honour of Our Lady, so that she might gain the intercession of the Virgin at the throne of God. The Virgin she had always taken for her patron saint, and in the midst of her crimes and disorderly life had never ceased in her peculiar devotion. As she could not go with the priest, she promised to be with him at least in the spirit. He left her at half-past ten in the morning, and after four hours spent alone together, she had been induced by his piety and gentleness to make confessions that could not be wrung from her by the threats of the judges or the fear of the question. The holy and devout priest said his mass, praying the Lord's help for confessor and penitent alike. After mass, as he returned, he learned from a librarian called Seney, at the porter's lodge, as he was taking a glass of wine, that judgment had been given, and that Madame de Brinvilliers was to have her hand cut off. This severity—as a fact, there was a mitigation of the sentence—made him feel yet more interest in his penitent, and he hastened back to her side.

As soon as she saw the door open, she advanced calmly towards him, and asked if he had truly prayed for her; and when he assured her of this,

she said, "Father, shall I have the consolation of receiving the viaticum before I die?"

"Madame," replied the doctor, "if you are condemned to death, you must die without that sacrament, and I should be deceiving you if I let you hope for it. We have heard of the death of the constable of Saint-Paul without his obtaining this grace, in spite of all his entreaties. He was executed in sight of the towers of Notre-Dame. He offered his own prayer, as you may offer yours, if you suffer the same fate. But that is all: God, in His goodness, allows it to suffice."

"But," replied the marquise, "I believe M. de Cinq-Mars and M. de Thou communicated before their death."

"I think not, madame," said the doctor; "for it is not so said in the pages of Montrésor or any other book that describes their execution."

"But M. de Montmorency?" said she.

"But M. de Marillac?" replied the doctor.

In truth, if the favour had been granted to the first, it had been refused to the second, and the marquise was specially struck thereby, for M. de Marillac was of her own family, and she was very proud of the connection. No doubt she was unaware that M. de Rohan had received the sacrament at the midnight mass said for the salvation of his soul by Father Bourdaloue, for she said nothing

about it, and hearing the doctor's answer, only sighed.

"Besides," he continued, "in recalling examples of the kind, madame, you must not build upon them, please: they are extraordinary cases, not the rule. You must expect no privilege; in your case the ordinary laws will be carried out, and your fate will not differ from the fate of other condemned persons. How would it have been had you lived and died before the reign of Charles VI? Up to the reign of this prince, the guilty died without confession, and it was only by this king's orders that there was a relaxation of this severity. Besides, communion is not absolutely necessary to salvation, and one may communicate spiritually in reading the word, which is like the body; in uniting oneself with the Church, which is the mystical substance of Christ; and in suffering for Him and with Him, this last communion of agony that is your portion, madame, and is the most perfect communion of all. If you heartily detest your crime and love God with all your soul, if you have faith and charity, your death is a martyrdom and a new baptism."

"Alas, my God," replied the marquise, "after what you tell me, now that I know the executioner's hand was necessary to my salvation, what should I have become had I died at Liège? Where should I have been now? And even if I had not been

taken, and had lived another twenty years away from France, what would my death have been, since it needed the scaffold for my purification? Now I see all my wrong-doings, and the worst of all is the last—I mean my effrontery before the judges. But all is not yet lost, God be thanked; and as I have one last examination to go through, I desire to make a complete confession about my whole life. You, sir, I entreat specially to ask pardon on my behalf of the first president; yesterday, when I was in the dock, he spoke very touching words to me, and I was deeply moved; but I would not show it, thinking that if I made no avowal the evidence would not be sufficiently strong to convict me. But it has happened otherwise, and I must have scandalised my judges by such an exhibition of hardihood. Now I recognise my fault, and will repair it. Furthermore, sir, far from feeling angry with the president for the judgment he to-day passes against me, far from complaining of the prosecutor who has demanded it, I thank them both most humbly, for my salvation depends upon it."

The doctor was about to answer, encouraging her, when the door opened: it was dinner coming in, for it was now half-past one. The marquise paused and watched what was brought in, as though she were playing hostess in her own country house. She made the woman and the two men who watched

her sit down to the table, and turning to the doctor, said, "Sir, you will not wish me to stand on ceremony with you; these good people always dine with me to keep me company, and if you approve, we will do the same to-day. This is the last meal," she added, addressing them, "that I shall take with you." Then turning to the woman, "Poor Madame du Rus," said she, "I have been a trouble to you for a long time; but have a little patience, and you will soon be rid of me. To-morrow you can go to Dravet; you will have time, for in seven or eight hours from now there will be nothing more to do for me, and I shall be in the gentleman's hands; you will not be allowed near me. After then, you can go away for good; for I don't suppose you will have the heart to see me executed." All this she said quite calmly, but not with pride. From time to time her people tried to hide their tears, and she made a sign of pitying them. Seeing that the dinner was on the table and nobody eating, she invited the doctor to take some soup, asking him to excuse the cabbage in it, which made it a common soup and unworthy of his acceptance. She herself took some soup and two eggs, begging her fellow-guests to excuse her for not serving them, pointing out that no knife or fork had been set in her place.

When the meal was almost half finished, she

begged the doctor to let her drink his health. He replied by drinking hers, and she seemed to be quite charmed by his condescension. "To-morrow is a fast day," said she, setting down her glass, "and although it will be a day of great fatigue for me, as I shall have to undergo the question as well as death, I intend to obey the orders of the Church and keep my fast."

"Madame," replied the doctor, "if you needed soup to keep you up, you would not have to feel any scruple, for it will be no self-indulgence, but a necessity, and the Church does not exact fasting in such a case."

"Sir," replied the marquise, "I will make no difficulty about it, if it is necessary and if you order it; but it will not be needed, I think: if I have some soup this evening for supper, and some more made stronger than usual a little before midnight, it will be enough to last me through to-morrow, if I have two fresh eggs to take after the question."

"In truth," says the priest in the account we give here, "I was alarmed by this calm behaviour. I trembled when I heard her give orders to the concierge that the soup was to be made stronger than usual and that she was to have two cups before midnight. When dinner was over, she was given pen and ink, which she had already asked for, and told me that she had a letter to write before I took

up my pen to put down what she wanted to dictate." The letter, she explained, which was difficult to write, was to her husband. She would feel easier when it was written. For her husband she expressed so much affection, that the doctor, knowing what had passed, felt much surprised, and wishing to try her, said that the affection was not reciprocated, as her husband had abandoned her the whole time of the trial. The marquise interrupted him:—

"My father, we must not judge things too quickly or merely by appearances. M. de Brinvilliers has always concerned himself with me, and has only failed in doing what it was impossible to do. Our interchange of letters never ceased while I was out of the kingdom; do not doubt but that he would have come to Paris as soon as he knew I was in prison, had the state of his affairs allowed him to come safely. But you must know that he is deeply in debt, and could not appear in Paris without being arrested. Do not suppose that he is without feeling for me."

She then began to write, and when her letter was finished she handed it to the doctor, saying, "You, sir, are the lord and master of all my sentiments from now till I die; read this letter, and if you find anything that should be altered, tell me."

This was the letter:—

"When I am on the point of yielding up my soul to God, I wish to assure you of my affection for you, which I shall feel until the last moment of my life. I ask your pardon for all that I have done contrary to my duty. I am dying a shameful death, the work of my enemies: I pardon them with all my heart, and I pray you to do the same. I also beg you to forgive me for any ignominy that may attach to you herefrom; but consider that we are only here for a time, and that you may soon be forced to render an account to God of all your actions, and even your idle words, just as I must do now. Be mindful of your worldly affairs, and of our children, and give them a good example; consult Madame Marillac and Madame Cousté. Let as many prayers as possible be said for me, and believe that in my death I am still ever yours, D'AUBRAY."

The doctor read this letter carefully; then he told her that one of her phrases was not right—the one about her enemies. "For you have no other enemies," said he, "than your own crimes. Those whom you call your enemies are those who love the memory of your father and brothers, whom you ought to have loved more than they do."

"But those who have sought my death," she replied, "are my enemies, are they not, and is it not a Christian act to forgive them?"

"Madame," said the doctor, "they are not your enemies, but you are the enemy of the human race: nobody can think without horror of your crimes."

"And so, my father," she replied, "I feel no resentment towards them, and I desire to meet in Paradise those who have been chiefly instrumental in taking me and bringing me here."

"Madame," said the doctor, "what mean you by this? Such words are used by some when they desire people's death. Explain, I beg, what you mean."

"Heaven forbid," cried the marquise, "that you should understand me thus! Nay, may God grant them long prosperity in this world and infinite glory in the next! Dictate a new letter, and I will write just what you please."

When a fresh letter had been written, the marquise would attend to nothing but her confession, and begged the doctor to take the pen for her. "I have done so many wrong things," she said, "that if I only gave you a verbal confession, I should never be sure I had given a complete account."

Then they both knelt down to implore the grace of the Holy Spirit. They said a *Veni Creator* and a *Salve Regina,* and the doctor then rose and seated himself at a table, while the marquise, still on her knees, began a *Confiteor* and made her whole confession. At nine o'clock, Father Chavigny, who

had brought Doctor Pirot in the morning, came in again. The marquise seemed annoyed, but still put a good face upon it. "My father," said she, "I did not expect to see you so late; pray leave me a few minutes longer with the doctor." He retired. "Why has he come?" asked the marquise.

"It is better for you not to be alone," said the doctor.

"Then do you mean to leave me?" cried the marquise, apparently terrified.

"Madame, I will do as you wish," he answered; "but you would be acting kindly if you could spare me for a few hours. I might go home, and Father Chavigny would stay with you."

"Ah!" she cried, wringing her hands, "you promised you would not leave me till I am dead, and now you go away. Remember, I never saw you before this morning, but since then you have become more to me than any of my oldest friends."

"Madame," said the good doctor, "I will do all I can to please you. If I ask for a little rest, it is in order that I may resume my place with more vigour to-morrow, and render you better service than I otherwise could. If I take no rest, all I say or do must suffer. You count on the execution for to-morrow; I do not know if you are right; but if so, to-morrow will be your great and decisive day, and we shall both need all the strength we have. We

have already been working for thirteen or fourteen hours for the good of your salvation; I am not a strong man, and I think you should realise, madame, that if you do not let me rest a little, I may not be able to stay with you to the end."

"Sir," said the marquise, "you have closed my mouth. To-morrow is for me a far more important day than to-day, and I have been wrong: of course you must rest to-night. Let us just finish this one thing, and read over what we have written."

It was done, and the doctor would have retired; but the supper came in, and the marquise would not let him go without taking something. She told the concierge to get a carriage and charge it to her. She took a cup of soup and two eggs, and a minute later the concierge came back to say the carriage was at the door. Then the marquise bade the doctor good-night, making him promise to pray for her and to be at the Conciergerie by six o'clock the next morning. This he promised her.

The day following, as he went into the tower, he found Father Chavigny, who had taken his place with the marquise, kneeling and praying with her. The priest was weeping, but she was calm, and received the doctor in just the same way as she had let him go. When Father Chavigny saw him, he retired. The marquise begged Chavigny to pray for her, and wanted to make him promise to return,

but that he would not do. She then turned to the doctor, saying, "Sir, you are punctual, and I cannot complain that you have broken your promise; but oh, how the time has dragged, and how long it has seemed before the clock struck six!"

"I am here, madame," said the doctor; "but first of all, how have you spent the night?"

"I have written three letters," said the marquise, "and, short as they were, they took a long time to write: one was to my sister, one to Madame de Marillac, and the third to M. Cousté. I should have liked to show them to you, but Father Chavigny offered to take charge of them, and as he had approved of them, I could not venture to suggest any doubts. After the letters were written, we had some conversation and prayer; but when the father took up his breviary and I my rosary with the same intention, I felt so weary that I asked if I might lie on my bed; he said I might, and I had two good hours' sleep without dreams or any sort of uneasiness; when I woke we prayed together, and had just finished when you came back."

"Well, madame," said the doctor, "if you will, we can pray again; kneel down, and let us say the *Veni Sancte Spiritus.*"

She obeyed, and said the prayer with much unction and piety. The prayer finished, M. Pirot was about to take up the pen to go on with the confes-

sion, when she said, "Pray let me submit to you one question which is troubling me. Yesterday you gave me great hope of the mercy of God; but I cannot presume to hope I shall be saved without spending a long time in purgatory; my crime is far too atrocious to be pardoned on any other conditions; and when I have attained to a love of God far greater than I can feel here, I should not expect to be saved before my stains have been purified by fire, without suffering the penalty that my sins have deserved. But I have been told that the flames of purgatory where souls are burned for a time are just the same as the flames of hell where those who are damned burn through all eternity: tell me, then, how can a soul awaking in purgatory at the moment of separation from this body be sure that she is not really in hell? how can she know that the flames that burn her and consume not will some day cease? For the torment she suffers is like that of the damned, and the flames wherewith she is burned are even as the flames of hell. This I would fain know, that at this awful moment I may feel no doubt, that I may know for certain whether I dare hope or must despair."

"Madame," replied the doctor, "you are right, and God is too just to add the horror of uncertainty to His rightful punishments. At that moment when the soul quits her earthly body the judgment of God

is passed upon her: she hears the sentence of pardon or of doom; she knows whether she is in the state of grace or of mortal sin; she sees whether she is to be plunged forever into hell, or if God sends her for a time to purgatory. This sentence, madame, you will learn at the very instant when the executioner's axe strikes you; unless, indeed, the fire of charity has so purified you in this life that you may pass, without any purgatory at all, straight to the home of the blessed who surround the throne of the Lord, there to receive a recompense for earthly martyrdom."

"Sir," replied the marquise, "I have such faith in all you say that I feel I understand it all now, and I am satisfied."

The doctor and the marquise then resumed the confession that was interrupted the night before. The marquise had during the night recollected certain articles that she wanted to add. So they continued, the doctor making her pause now and then in the narration of the heavier offences to recite an act of contrition.

After an hour and a half they came to tell her to go down. The registrar was waiting to read her the sentence. She listened very calmly, kneeling, only moving her head; then, with no alteration in her voice, she said, "In a moment: we will have one word more, the doctor and I, and then I am at

your disposal." She then continued to dictate the rest of her confession. When she reached the end, she begged him to offer a short prayer with her, that God might help her to appear with such becoming contrition before her judges as should atone for her scandalous effrontery. She then took up her cloak, a prayer-book which Father Chavigny had left with her, and followed the concierge, who led her to the torture chamber, where her sentence was to be read.

First, there was an examination which lasted five hours. The marquise told all she had promised to tell, denying that she had any accomplices, and affirming that she knew nothing of the composition of the poisons she had administered, and nothing of their antidotes. When this was done, and the judges saw that they could extract nothing further, they signed to the registrar to read the sentence. She stood to hear it: it was as follows:—

"That by the finding of the court, d'Aubray de Brinvilliers is convicted of causing the death by poison of Maître Dreux d'Aubray, her father, and of the two Maîtres d'Aubray, her brothers, one a civil lieutenant, the other a councillor to the Parliament, also of attempting the life of Thérèse d'Aubray, her sister; in punishment whereof the court has condemned and does condemn the said d'Aubray de Brinvilliers to make the rightful atonement before the great gate of the church of Paris, whither

she shall be conveyed in a tumbril, barefoot, a rope on her neck, holding in her hands a burning torch two pounds in weight; and there on her knees she shall say and declare that maliciously, with desire for revenge and seeking their goods, she did poison her father, cause to be poisoned her two brothers, and attempt the life of her sister, whereof she doth repent, asking pardon of God, of the king, and of the judges; and when this is done, she shall be conveyed and carried in the same tumbril to the Place de Grève of this town, there to have her head cut off on a scaffold to be set up for the purpose at that place; afterwards her body to be burnt and the ashes scattered; and first she is to be subjected to the question ordinary and extraordinary, that she may reveal the names of her accomplices. She is declared to be deprived of all successions from her said father, brothers, and sister, from the date of the several crimes; and all her goods are confiscated to the proper persons; and the sum of 4000 livres shall be paid out of her estate to the king, and 400 livres to the Church for prayers to be said on behalf of the poisoned persons; and all the costs shall be paid, including those of Amelin called Lachaussée. In Parliament, 16th July 1676."

The marquise heard her sentence without showing any sign of fear or weakness. When it was finished, she said to the registrar, "Will you, sir, be

so kind as to read it again? I had not expected the tumbril, and I was so much struck by that that I lost the thread of what followed."

The registrar read the sentence again. From that moment she was the property of the executioner, who approached her. She knew him by the cord he held in his hands, and extended her own, looking him over coolly from head to foot without a word. The judges then filed out, disclosing as they did so the various apparatus of the question. The marquise firmly gazed upon the racks and ghastly rings, on which so many had been stretched crying and screaming. She noticed the three buckets of water[1] prepared for her, and turned to the registrar—for she would not address the executioner—saying, with a smile, " No doubt all this water is to drown me in? I hope you don't suppose that a person of my size could swallow it all." The executioner said not a word, but began taking off her cloak and all her other garments, until she was completely naked. He then led her up to the wall and made her sit on the rack of the ordinary question, two feet from the ground. There she was again asked to give the

[1] The torture with the water was thus administered. There were eight vessels, each containing 2½ pints of water. Four of these were given for the ordinary, and eight for the extraordinary. The executioner inserted a horn into the patient's mouth, and if he shut his teeth, forced him to open them by pinching his nose with the finger and thumb.

names of her accomplices, the composition of the poison and its antidote; but she made the same reply as to the doctor, only adding, "If you do not believe me, you have my body in your hands, and you can torture me."

The registrar signed to the executioner to do his duty. He first fastened the feet of the marquise to two rings close together fixed to a board; then making her lie down, he fastened her wrists to two other rings in the wall, distant about three feet from each other. The head was at the same height as the feet, and the body, held up on a trestle, described a half-curve, as though lying over a wheel. To increase the stretch of the limbs, the man gave two turns to a crank, which pushed the feet, at first about twelve inches from the rings, to a distance of six inches. And here we may leave our narrative to reproduce the official report.

"On the small trestle, while she was being stretched, she said several times, 'My God! you are killing me! And I only spoke the truth.'

"The water was given: she turned and twisted, saying, 'You are killing me!'

"The water was again given.

"Admonished to name her accomplices, she said there was only one man, who had asked her for poison to get rid of his wife, but he was dead.

"The water was given; she moved a little, but would not say anything.

"Admonished to say why, if she had no accomplice, she had written from the Conciergerie to Penautier, begging him to do all he could for her, and to remember that his interests in this matter were the same as her own, she said that she never knew Penautier had had any understanding with Sainte-Croix about the poisons, and it would be a lie to say otherwise; but when a paper was found in Sainte-Croix's box that concerned Penautier, she remembered how often she had seen him at the house, and thought it possible that the friendship might have included some business about the poisons; that, being in doubt on the point, she risked writing a letter as though she were sure, for by doing so she was not prejudicing her own case; for either Penautier was an accomplice of Sainte-Croix or he was not. If he was, he would suppose the marquise knew enough to accuse him, and would accordingly do his best to save her; if he was not, the letter was a letter wasted, and that was all.

"The water was again given; she turned and twisted much, but said that on this subject she had said all she possibly could; if she said anything else, it would be untrue."

The ordinary question was at an end. The mar-

quise had now taken half the quantity of water she had thought enough to drown her. The executioner paused before he proceeded to the extraordinary question. Instead of the trestle two feet and a half high on which she lay, they passed under her body a trestle of three and a half feet, which gave the body a greater arch, and as this was done without lengthening the ropes, her limbs were still further stretched, and the bonds, tightly straining at wrists and ankles, penetrated the flesh and made the blood run. The question began once more, interrupted by the demands of the registrar and the answers of the sufferer. Her cries seemed not even to be heard.

"On the large trestle, during the stretching, she said several times, 'O God, you tear me to pieces! Lord, pardon me! Lord, have mercy upon me!'

"Asked if she had nothing more to tell regarding her accomplices, she said they might kill her, but she would not tell a lie that would destroy her soul.

"The water was given, she moved about a little, but would not speak.

"Admonished that she should tell the composition of the poisons and their antidotes, she said that she did not know what was in them; the only thing she could recall was toads; that Sainte-Croix never

revealed his secret to her; that she did not believe he made them himself, but had them prepared by Glazer; she seemed to remember that some of them contained nothing but rarefied arsenic; that as to an antidote, she knew of no other than milk; and Sainte-Croix had told her that if one had taken milk in the morning, and on the first onset of the poison took another glassful, one would have nothing to fear.

"Admonished to say if she could add anything further, she said she had now told everything; and if they killed her, they could not extract anything more.

"More water was given; she writhed a little, and said she was dead, but nothing more.

"More water was given; she writhed more violently, but would say no more.

"Yet again water was given; writhing and twisting, she said, with a deep groan, 'O my God, I am killed!' but would speak no more."

Then they tortured her no further: she was let down, untied, and placed before the fire in the usual manner. While there, close to the fire, lying on the mattress, she was visited by the good doctor, who, feeling he could not bear to witness the spectacle just described, had asked her leave to retire, that he might say a mass for her, that God might grant

her patience and courage. It is plain that the good priest had not prayed in vain.

"Ah," said the marquise, when she perceived him, "I have long been desiring to see you again, that you might comfort me. My torture has been very long and very painful, but this is the last time I shall have to treat with men; now all is with God for the future. See my hands, sir, and my feet, are they not torn and wounded? Have not my executioners smitten me in the same places where Christ was smitten?"

"And therefore, madame," replied the priest, "these sufferings now are your happiness; each torture is one step nearer to heaven. As you say, you are now for God alone; all your thoughts and hopes must be fastened upon Him; we must pray to Him, like the penitent king, to give you a place among His elect; and since nought that is impure can pass thither, we must strive, madame, to purify you from all that might bar the way to heaven."

The marquise rose with the doctor's aid, for she could scarcely stand; tottering, she stepped forward between him and the executioner, who took charge of her immediately after the sentence was read, and was not allowed to leave her before it was completely carried out. They all three entered the chapel and went into the choir, where the doctor and the marquise knelt in adoration of the Blessed

Sacrament. At that moment several persons appeared in the nave, drawn by curiosity. They could not be turned out, so the executioner, to save the marquise from being annoyed, shut the gate of the choir, and let the patient pass behind the altar. There she sat down in a chair, and the doctor on a seat opposite; then he first saw, by the light of the chapel window, how greatly changed she was. Her face, generally so pale, was inflamed, her eyes glowing and feverish, all her body involuntarily trembling. The doctor would have spoken a few words of consolation, but she did not attend. "Sir," she said, "do you know that my sentence is an ignominious one? Do you know there is fire in the sentence?"

The doctor gave no answer; but, thinking she needed something, bade the gaoler to bring her wine. A minute later he brought it in a cup, and the doctor handed it to the marquise, who moistened her lips and then gave it back. She then noticed that her neck was uncovered, and took out her handkerchief to cover it, asking the gaoler for a pin to fasten it with. When he was slow in finding a pin, looking on his person for it, she fancied that he feared she would choke herself, and shaking her head, said, with a smile, "You have nothing to fear now; and here is the doctor, who will pledge his word that I will do myself no mischief."

"Madame," said the gaoler, handing her the pin she wanted, "I beg your pardon for keeping you waiting. I swear I did not distrust you; if anyone distrusts you, it is not I."

Then kneeling before her, he begged to kiss her hand. She gave it, and asked him to pray to God for her. "Ah yes," he cried, sobbing, "with all my heart." She then fastened her dress as best she could with her hands tied, and when the gaoler had gone and she was alone with the doctor, said—

"Did you not hear what I said, sir? I told you there was fire in my sentence. And though it is only after death that my body is to be burnt, it will always be a terrible disgrace on my memory. I am saved the pain of being burnt alive, and thus, perhaps, saved from a death of despair, but the shamefulness is the same, and it is that I think of."

"Madame," said the doctor, "it in no way affects your soul's salvation whether your body is cast into the fire and reduced to ashes or whether it is buried in the ground and eaten by worms, whether it is drawn on a hurdle and thrown upon a dung-heap, or embalmed with Oriental perfumes and laid in a rich man's tomb. Whatever may be your end, your body will arise on the appointed day, and if Heaven so will, it will come forth from its ashes more

glorious than a royal corpse lying at this moment in a gilded casket. Obsequies, madame, are for those who survive, not for the dead."

A sound was heard at the door of the choir. The doctor went to see what it was, and found a man who insisted on entering, all but fighting with the executioner. The doctor approached and asked what was the matter. The man was a saddler, from whom the marquise had bought a carriage before she left France; this she had partly paid for, but still owed him two hundred livres. He produced the note he had had from her, on which was a faithful record of the sums she had paid on account. The marquise at this point called out, not knowing what was going on, and the doctor and executioner went to her. "Have they come to fetch me already?" said she. "I am not well prepared just at this moment; but never mind, I am ready."

The doctor reassured her, and told her what was going on. "The man is quite right," she said to the executioner; "tell him I will give orders as far as I can about the money." Then, seeing the executioner retiring, she said to the doctor, "Must I go now, sir? I wish they would give me a little more time; for though I am ready, as I told you, I am not really prepared. Forgive me, father; it is the question and the sentence that have upset me: it is this fire burning in my eyes like hell-flames.

Had they left me with you all this time, there would now be better hope of my salvation."

"Madame," said the doctor, "you will probably have all the time before nightfall to compose yourself and think what remains for you to do."

"Ah, sir," she replied, with a smile, "do not think they will show so much consideration for a poor wretch condemned to be burnt. That does not depend on ourselves; but as soon as everything is ready, they will let us know, and we must start."

"Madame," said the doctor, "I am certain that they will give you the time you need."

"No, no," she replied abruptly and feverishly, "no, I will not keep them waiting. As soon as the tumbril is at this door, they have only to tell me, and I go down."

"Madame," said he, "I would not hold you back if I found you prepared to stand before the face of God, for in your situation it is right to ask for no time, and to go when the moment is come; but not everyone is so ready as Christ was, who rose from prayer and awaked His disciples that He might leave the garden and go out to meet His enemies. You at this moment are weak, and if they come for you just now I should resist your departure."

"Be calm; the time is not yet come," said the executioner, who had heard this talk. He knew his statement must be believed, and wished as far as

possible to reassure the marquise. "There is no hurry, and we cannot start for another two or three hours."

This assurance calmed the marquise somewhat, and she thanked the man. Then turning to the doctor, she said, "Here is a rosary that I would rather should not fall into this person's hands. Not that he could not make good use of it; for, in spite of their trade, I fancy that these people are Christians like ourselves. But I should prefer to leave this to somebody else."

"Madame," said the doctor, "if you will tell me your wishes in this matter, I will see that they are carried out."

"Alas!" she said, "there is no one but my sister; and I fear lest she, remembering my crime towards her, may be too horrified to touch anything that belonged to me. If she did not mind, it would be a great comfort to me to think she would wear it after my death, and that the sight of it would remind her to pray for me; but after what has passed, the rosary could hardly fail to revive an odious recollection. My God, my God! I am desperately wicked; can it be that you will pardon me?"

"Madame," replied the doctor, "I think you are mistaken about Mlle. d'Aubray. You may see by her letter what are her feelings towards you, and

you must pray with this rosary up to the very end. Let not your prayers be interrupted or distracted, for no guilty penitent must cease from prayer; and I, madame, will engage to deliver the rosary where it will be gladly received."

And the marquise, who had been constantly distracted since the morning, was now, thanks to the patient goodness of the doctor, able to return with her former fervour to her prayers. She prayed till seven o'clock. As the clock struck, the executioner without a word came and stood before her; she saw that her moment had come, and said to the doctor, grasping his arm, "A little longer; just a few moments, I entreat."

"Madame," said the doctor, rising, "we will now adore the divine blood of the Sacrament, praying that you may be thus cleansed from all soil and sin that may be still in your heart. Thus shall you gain the respite you desire."

The executioner then tied tight the cords round her hands that he had let loose before, and she advanced pretty firmly and knelt before the altar, between the doctor and the chaplain. The latter was in his surplice, and chanted a *Veni Creator, Salve Regina,* and *Tantum ergo.* These prayers over, he pronounced the blessing of the Holy Sacrament, while the marquise knelt with her face upon the ground. The executioner then went for-

ward to get ready a shirt, and she made her exit from the chapel, supported on the left by the doctor's arm, on the right by the executioner's assistant. Thus proceeding, she first felt embarrassment and confusion. Ten or twelve people were waiting outside, and as she suddenly confronted them, she made a step backward, and with her hands, bound though they were, pulled the headdress down to cover half her face. She passed through a small door, which was closed behind her, and then found herself between the two doors alone, with the doctor and the executioner's man. Here the rosary, in consequence of her violent movement to cover her face, came undone, and several beads fell on the floor. She went on, however, without observing this; but the doctor stopped her, and he and the man stooped down and picked up all the beads, which they put into her hand. Thanking them humbly for this attention, she said to the man, "Sir, I know I have now no worldly possessions, that all I have upon me belongs to you, and I may not give anything away without your consent; but I ask you kindly to allow me to give this chaplet to the doctor before I die: you will not be much the loser, for it is of no value, and I am giving it to him for my sister. Kindly let me do this."

"Madame," said the man, "it is the custom for us to get all the property of the condemned; but you

are mistress of all you have, and if the thing were of the very greatest value you might dispose of it as you pleased."

The doctor, whose arm she held, felt her shiver at this gallantry, which for her, with her natural haughty disposition, must have been the worst humiliation imaginable; but the movement was restrained, and her face gave no sign. She now came to the porch of the Conciergerie, between the court and the first door, and there she was made to sit down, so as to be put into the right condition for making the *amende honorable*. Each step brought her nearer to the scaffold, and so did each incident cause her more uneasiness. Now she turned round desperately, and perceived the executioner holding a shirt in his hand. The door of the vestibule opened, and about fifty people came in, among them the Countess of Soissons, Madame du Refuge, Mlle. de Scudery, M. de Roquelaure, and the Abbé de Chimay. At the sight the marquise reddened with shame, and turning to the doctor, said, "Is this man to strip me again, as he did in the question chamber? All these preparations are very cruel; and, in spite of myself, they divert my thoughts from God."

Low as her voice was, the executioner heard, and reassured her, saying that they would take nothing off, only putting the shirt over her other clothes.

He then approached, and the marquise, unable to speak to the doctor with a man on each side of her, showed him by her looks how deeply she felt the ignominy of her situation. Then, when the shirt had been put on, for which operation her hands had to be untied, the man raised the headdress which she had pulled down, and tied it round her neck, then fastened her hands together with one rope and put another round her waist, and yet another round her neck; then, kneeling before her, he took off her shoes and stockings. Then she stretched out her hands to the doctor.

"Oh, sir," she cried, "in God's name, you see what they have done to me! Come and comfort me."

The doctor came at once, supporting her head upon his breast, trying to comfort her; but she, in a tone of bitter lamentation, gazing at the crowd, who devoured her with all their eyes, cried, "Oh, sir, is not this a strange, barbarous curiosity?"

"Madame," said he, the tears in his eyes, "do not look at these eager people from the point of view of their curiosity and barbarity, though that is real enough, but consider it part of the humiliation sent by God for the expiation of your crimes. God, who was innocent, was subject to very different opprobrium, and yet suffered all with joy; for, as Tertullian observes, He was a victim fattened on the joys of suffering alone."

As the doctor spoke these words, the executioner placed in the marquise's hands the lighted torch which she was to carry to Notre-Dame, there to make the *amende honorable,* and as it was too heavy, weighing two pounds, the doctor supported it with his right hand, while the registrar read her sentence aloud a second time. The doctor did all in his power to prevent her from hearing this by speaking unceasingly of God. Still she grew frightfully pale at the words, "When this is done, she shall be conveyed on a tumbril, barefoot, a cord round her neck, holding in her hands a burning torch two pounds in weight," and the doctor could feel no doubt that in spite of his efforts she had heard. It became still worse when she reached the threshold of the vestibule and saw the great crowd waiting in the court. Then her face worked convulsively, and crouching down, as though she would bury her feet in the earth, she addressed the doctor in words both plaintive and wild: "Is it possible that, after what is now happening, M. de Brinvilliers can endure to go on living?"

"Madame," said the doctor, "when our Lord was about to leave His disciples, He did not ask God to remove them from this earth, but to preserve them from all sin. 'My Father,' He said, 'I ask not that You take them from the world, but keep them safe from evil.' If, madame, you pray

for M. de Brinvilliers, let it be only that he may be kept in grace, if he has it, and may attain to it if he has it not."

But the words were useless: at that moment the humiliation was too great and too public; her face contracted, her eyebrows knit, flames darted from her eyes, her mouth was all twisted. Her whole appearance was horrible; the devil was once more in possession. During this paroxysm, which lasted nearly a quarter of an hour, Lebrun, who stood near, got such a vivid impression of her face that the following night he could not sleep, and with the sight of it ever before his eyes made the fine drawing which is now in the Louvre, giving to the figure the head of a tiger, in order to show that the principal features were the same, and the whole resemblance very striking.

The delay in progress was caused by the immense crowd blocking the court, only pushed aside by archers on horseback, who separated the people. The marquise now went out, and the doctor, lest the sight of the people should completely distract her, put a crucifix in her hand, bidding her fix her gaze upon it. This advice she followed till they gained the gate into the street where the tumbril was waiting; then she lifted her eyes to see the shameful object. It was one of the smallest of carts, still splashed with mud and marked by the

stones it had carried, with no seat, only a little straw at the bottom. It was drawn by a wretched horse, well matching the disgraceful conveyance.

The executioner bade her get in first, which she did very rapidly, as if to escape observation. There she crouched like a wild beast, in the left corner, on the straw, riding backwards. The doctor sat beside her on the right. Then the executioner got in, shutting the door behind him, and sat opposite her, stretching his legs between the doctor's. His man, whose business it was to guide the horse, sat on the front, back to back with the doctor and the marquise, his feet stuck out on the shafts. Thus it is easy to understand how Madame de Sévigné, who was on the Pont Notre-Dame, could see nothing but the headdress of the marquise as she was driven to Notre-Dame.

The cortège had only gone a few steps, when the face of the marquise, for a time a little calmer, was again convulsed. From her eyes, fixed constantly on the crucifix, there darted a flaming glance, then came a troubled and frenzied look which terrified the doctor. He knew she must have been struck by something she saw, and, wishing to calm her, asked what it was.

"Nothing, nothing," she replied quickly, looking towards him; "it was nothing."

"But, madame," said he, "you cannot give the

lie to your own eyes; and a minute ago I saw a fire very different from the fire of love, which only some displeasing sight can have provoked. What may this be? Tell me, pray; for you promised to tell me of any sort of temptation that might assail you."

"Sir," she said, "I will do so, but it is nothing." Then, looking towards the executioner, who, as we know, sat facing the doctor, she said, "Put me in front of you, please; hide that man from me." And she stretched out her hands towards a man who was following the tumbril on horseback, and so dropped the torch, which the doctor took, and the crucifix, which fell on the floor. The executioner looked back, and then turned sideways as she wished, nodding and saying, "Oh yes, I understand." The doctor pressed to know what it meant, and she said, "It is nothing worth telling you, and it is a weakness in me not to be able to bear the sight of a man who has ill-used me. The man who touched the back of the tumbril is Desgrais, who arrested me at Liège, and treated me so badly all along the road. When I saw him, I could not control myself, as you noticed."

"Madame," said the doctor, "I have heard of him, and you yourself spoke of him in confession; but the man was sent to arrest you, and was in a responsible position, so that he had to guard you

closely and rigorously; even if he had been more severe, he would only have been carrying out his orders. Jesus Christ, madame, could but have regarded His executioners as ministers of iniquity, servants of injustice, who added of their own accord every indignity they could think of; yet all along the way He looked on them with patience and more than patience, and in His death He prayed for them."

In the heart of the marquise a hard struggle was passing, and this was reflected on her face; but it was only for a moment, and after a last convulsive shudder she was again calm and serene; then she said—

"Sir, you are right, and I am very wrong to feel such a fancy as this: may God forgive me; and pray remember this fault on the scaffold, when you give me the absolution you promise, that this too may be pardoned me." Then she turned to the executioner and said, "Please sit where you were before, that I may see M. Desgrais." The man hesitated, but on a sign from the doctor obeyed. The marquise looked fully at Desgrais for some time, praying for him; then, fixing her eyes on the crucifix, began to pray for herself: this incident occurred in front of the church of Sainte-Geneviève des Ardents.

But, slowly as it moved, the tumbril steadily advanced, and at last reached the place of Notre-Dame. The archers drove back the crowding peo-

ple, and the tumbril went up to the steps, and there stopped. The executioner got down, removed the board at the back, held out his arms to the marquise, and set her down on the pavement. The doctor then got down, his legs quite numb from the cramped position he had been in since they left the Conciergerie. He mounted the church steps and stood behind the marquise, who herself stood on the square, with the registrar on her right, the executioner on her left, and a great crowd of people behind her, inside the church, all the doors being thrown open. She was made to kneel, and in her hands was placed the lighted torch, which up to that time the doctor had helped to carry. Then the registrar read the *amende honorable* from a written paper, and she began to say it after him, but in so low a voice that the executioner said loudly, "Speak out as he does; repeat every word. Louder, louder!" Then she raised her voice, and loudly and firmly recited the following apology:—

"I confess that, wickedly and for revenge, I poisoned my father and my brothers, and attempted to poison my sister, to obtain possession of their goods, and I ask pardon of God, of the king, and of my country's laws."

The *amende honorable* over, the executioner again carried her to the tumbril, not giving her the torch any more: the doctor sat beside her: all was just

as before, and the tumbril went on towards La Grève. From that moment, until she arrived at the scaffold, she never took her eyes off the crucifix, which the doctor held before her the whole time, exhorting her with religious words, trying to divert her attention from the terrible noise which the people made around the car, a murmur mingled with curses.

When they reached the Place de Grève, the tumbril stopped at a little distance from the scaffold. Then the registrar M. Drouet, came up on horseback, and, adressing the marquise, said, "Madame, have you nothing more to say? If you wish to make any declaration, the twelve commissaries are here at hand, ready to receive it."

"You see, madame," said the doctor, "we are now at the end of our journey, and, thank God, you have not lost your power of endurance on the road; do not destroy the effect of all you have suffered and all you have yet to suffer by concealing what you know, if perchance you do know more than you have hitherto said."

"I have told all I know," said the marquise, "and there is no more I can say."

"Repeat these words in a loud voice," said the doctor, "so that everybody may hear."

Then in her loudest voice the marquise repeated—

"I have told all I know, and there is no more I can say."

After this declaration, they were going to drive the tumbril nearer to the scaffold, but the crowd was so dense that the assistant could not force a way through, though he struck out on every side with his whip. So they had to stop a few paces short. The executioner had already got down, and was adjusting the ladder. In this terrible moment of waiting, the marquise looked calmly and gratefully at the doctor, and when she felt that the tumbril had stopped, said, "Sir, it is not here we part: you promised not to leave me till my head is cut off. I trust you will keep your word."

"To be sure I will," the doctor replied; "we shall not be separated before the moment of your death: be not troubled about that, for I will never forsake you."

"I looked for this kindness," she said, "and your promise was too solemn for you to think for one moment of failing me. Please be on the scaffold and be near me. And now, sir, I would anticipate the final farewell,—for all the things I shall have to do on the scaffold may distract me,—so let me thank you here. If I am prepared to suffer the sentence of my earthly judge, and to hear that of my heavenly Judge, I owe it to your care for me, and I am deeply grateful. I can only ask your forgiveness

for the trouble I have given you." Tears choked the doctor's speech, and he could not reply. "Do you not forgive me?" she repeated. At her words, the doctor tried to reassure her; but feeling that if he opened his mouth he must needs break into sobs, he still kept silent. The marquise appealed to him a third time. "I entreat you, sir, forgive me; and do not regret the time you have passed with me. You will say a *De Profundis* at the moment of my death, and a mass for me to-morrow: will you not promise?"

"Yes, madame," said the doctor in a choking voice; "yes, yes, be calm, and I will do all you bid me."

The executioner hereupon removed the board, and helped the marquise out of the tumbril; and as they advanced the few steps towards the scaffold, and all eyes were upon them, the doctor could hide his tears for a moment without being observed. As he was drying his eyes, the assistant gave him his hand to help him down. Meanwhile the marquise was mounting the ladder with the executioner, and when they reached the platform he told her to kneel down in front of a block which lay across it. Then the doctor, who had mounted with a step less firm than hers, came and knelt beside her, but turned in the other direction, so that he might whisper in her ear—that is, the marquise faced the river,

and the doctor faced the Hotel de Ville. Scarcely had they taken their place thus when the man took down her hair and began cutting it at the back and at the sides, making her turn her head this way and that, at times rather roughly; but though this ghastly toilet lasted almost half an hour, she made no complaint, nor gave any sign of pain but her silent tears. When her hair was cut, he tore open the top of the shirt, so as to uncover the shoulders, and finally bandaged her eyes, and lifting her face by the chin, ordered her to hold her head erect. She obeyed, unresisting, all the time listening to the doctor's words and repeating them from time to time, when they seemed suitable to her own condition. Meanwhile, at the back of the scaffold, on which the stake was placed, stood the executioner, glancing now and again at the folds of his cloak, where there showed the hilt of a long, straight sabre, which he had carefully concealed for fear Madame de Brinvilliers might see it when she mounted the scaffold. When the doctor, having pronounced absolution, turned his head and saw that the man was not yet armed, he uttered these prayers, which she repeated after him: "Jesus, Son of David and Mary, have mercy upon me; Mary, daughter of David and Mother of Jesus, pray for me; my God, I abandon my body, which is but dust, that men may burn it and do with it what they please, in the firm faith that it shall one

day arise and be reunited with my soul. I trouble not concerning my body; grant, O God, that I yield up to Thee my soul, that it may enter into Thy rest; receive it into Thy bosom, that it may dwell once more there, whence it first descended; from Thee it came, to Thee returns; Thou art the source and the beginning; be thou, O God, the centre and the end!"

The marquise had said these words when suddenly the doctor heard a dull stroke like the sound of a chopper chopping meat upon a block: at that moment she ceased to speak. The blade had sped so quickly that the doctor had not even seen a flash. He stopped, his hair bristling, his brow bathed in sweat; for, not seeing the head fall, he supposed that the executioner had missed the mark and must needs start afresh. But his fear was short-lived, for almost at the same moment the head inclined to the left, slid on to the shoulder, and thence backward, while the body fell forward on the crossway block, supported so that the spectators could see the neck cut open and bleeding. Immediately, in fulfilment of his promise, the doctor said a *De Profundis.*

When the prayer was done and the doctor raised his head, he saw before him the executioner wiping his face. "Well, sir," said he, "was not that a good stroke? I always put up a prayer on these occasions, and God has always assisted me; but I have been anxious for several days about this lady.

I had six masses said, and I felt strengthened in hand and heart." He then pulled out a bottle from under his cloak, and drank a dram; and taking the body under one arm, all dressed as it was, and the head in his other hand, the eyes still bandaged, he threw both upon the faggots, which his assistant lighted.

"The next day," says Madame de Sévigné, "people were looking for the charred bones of Madame de Brinvilliers, because they said she was a saint."

In 1814, M. d'Offemont, father of the present occupier of the castle where the Marquise de Brinvilliers poisoned her father, frightened at the approach of all the allied troops, contrived in one of the towers several hiding-places, where he shut up his silver and such other valuables as were to be found in this lonely country in the midst of the forest of Laigue. The foreign troops were passing backwards and forwards at Offemont, and after a three months' occupation retired to the farther side of the frontier.

Then the owners ventured to take out the various things that had been hidden; and tapping the walls, to make sure nothing had been overlooked, they detected a hollow sound that indicated the presence of some unsuspected cavity. With picks

and bars they broke the wall open, and when several stones had come out they found a large closet like a laboratory, containing furnaces, chemical instruments, phials hermetically sealed full of an unknown liquid, and four packets of powders of different colours. Unluckily, the people who made these discoveries thought them of too much or too little importance; and instead of submitting the ingredients to the tests of modern science, they made away with them all, frightened at their probably deadly nature.

Thus was lost this great opportunity—probably the last—for finding and analysing the substances which composed the poisons of Sainte-Croix and Madame de Brinvilliers.

VANINKA

VANINKA

ABOUT the end of the reign of the Emperor Paul I—that is to say, towards the middle of the first year of the nineteenth century—just as four o'clock in the afternoon was sounding from the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, whose gilded vane overlooks the ramparts of the fortress, a crowd, composed of all sorts and conditions of people, began to gather in front of a house which belonged to General Count Tchermayloff, formerly military governor of a fair-sized town in the government of Pultava. The first spectators had been attracted by the preparations which they saw had been made in the middle of the courtyard for administering torture with the knout. One of the general's serfs, he who acted as barber, was to be the victim.

Although this kind of punishment was a common enough sight in St. Petersburg, it nevertheless attracted all passers-by when it was publicly administered. This was the occurrence which had caused a crowd, as just mentioned, before General Tchermayloff's house.

The spectators, even had they been in a hurry, would have had no cause to complain of being kept waiting, for at half-past four a young man of about five-and-twenty, in the handsome uniform of an aide-de-camp, his breast covered with decorations, appeared on the steps at the farther end of the court-yard in front of the house. These steps faced the large gateway, and led to the general's apartments.

Arrived on the steps, the young aide-de-camp stopped a moment and fixed his eyes on a window, the closely drawn curtains of which did not allow him the least chance of satisfying his curiosity, whatever may have been its cause. Seeing that it was useless and that he was only wasting time in gazing in that direction, he made a sign to a bearded man who was standing near a door which led to the servants' quarters. The door was immediately opened, and the culprit was seen advancing in the middle of a body of serfs and followed by the executioner. The serfs were forced to attend the spectacle, that it might serve as an example to them. The culprit was the general's barber, as we have said, and the executioner was merely the coachman, who, being used to the handling of a whip, was raised or degraded, which you will, to the office of executioner every time punishment with the knout was ordered. This duty did not deprive him of

either the esteem or even the friendship of his comrades, for they well knew that it was his arm alone that punished them and that his heart was not in his work. As Ivan's arm as well as the rest of his body was the property of the general, and the latter could do as he pleased with it, no one was astonished that it should be used for this purpose. More than that, correction administered by Ivan was nearly always gentler than that meted out by another; for it often happened that Ivan, who was a good-natured fellow, juggled away one or two strokes of the knout in a dozen, or if he were forced by those assisting at the punishment to keep a strict calculation, he manœuvred so that the tip of the lash struck the deal plank on which the culprit was lying, thus taking much of the sting out of the stroke. Accordingly, when it was Ivan's turn to be stretched upon the fatal plank and to receive the correction he was in the habit of administering, on his own account, those who momentarily played his part as executioner adopted the same expedients, remembering only the strokes spared and not the strokes received. This exchange of mutual benefits, therefore, was productive of an excellent understanding between Ivan and his comrades, which was never so firmly knit as at the moment when a fresh execution was about to take place. It is true that the first hour after the punishment was generally so full

of suffering that the knouted was sometimes unjust to the knouter, but this feeling seldom out-lasted the evening, and it was rare when it held out after the first glass of spirits that the operator drank to the health of his patient.

The serf upon whom Ivan was about to exercise his dexterity was a man of five- or six-and-thirty, red of hair and beard, a little above average height. His Greek origin might be traced in his countenance, which even in its expression of terror had preserved its habitual characteristics of craft and cunning.

When he arrived at the spot where the punishment was to take place, the culprit stopped and looked up at the window which had already claimed the young aide-de-camp's attention; it still remained shut. With a glance round the throng which obstructed the entrance leading to the street, he ended by gazing, with a horror-stricken shudder upon the plank on which he was to be stretched. The shudder did not escape his friend Ivan, who, approaching to remove the striped shirt that covered his shoulders, took the opportunity to whisper under his breath—

"Come, Gregory, take courage!"

"You remember your promise?" replied the culprit, with an indefinable expression of entreaty.

"Not for the first lashes, Gregory; do not count on that, for during the first strokes the aide-de-camp

will be watching; but among the later ones be assured I will find means of cheating him of some of them."

"Beyond everything you will take care of the tip of the lash?"

"I will do my best, Gregory, I will do my best. Do you not know that I will?"

"Alas! yes," replied Gregory.

"Now, then!" said the aide-de-camp.

"We are ready, noble sir," replied Ivan.

"Wait, wait one moment, your high origin," cried poor Gregory, addressing the young captain as though he had been a colonel, "Vache Vousso Korodie," in order to flatter him. "I believe that the lady Vaninka's window is about to open!"

The young captain glanced eagerly towards the spot which had already several times claimed his attention, but not a fold of the silken curtains, which could be seen through the panes of the window, had moved.

"You are mistaken, you rascal," said the aide-de-camp, unwillingly removing his eyes from the window, as though he also had hoped to see it open,—"you are mistaken; and besides, what has your noble mistress to do with all this?"

"Pardon, your excellency," continued Gregory, gratifying the aide-de-camp with yet higher rank, —"pardon, but it is through her orders I am about

to suffer. Perhaps she might have pity upon a wretched servant!"

"Enough, enough; let us proceed," said the captain in an odd voice, as though he regretted as well as the culprit that Vaninka had not shown mercy.

"Immediately, immediately, noble sir," said Ivan; then turning to Gregory, he continued, "Come, comrade; the time has come."

Gregory sighed heavily, threw a last look up at the window, and seeing that everything remained the same there, he mustered up resolution enough to lie down on the fatal plank. At the same time two other serfs, chosen by Ivan for assistants, took him by the arms and attached his wrists to two stakes, one at either side of him, so that it appeared as though he were stretched on a cross. Then they clamped his neck into an iron collar, and seeing that all was in readiness and that no sign favourable to the culprit had been made from the still closely shut window, the young aide-de-camp beckoned with his hand, saying, "Now, then, begin!"

"Patience, my lord, patience," said Ivan, still delaying the whipping, in the hope that some sign might yet be made from the inexorable window. "I have a knot in my knout, and if I leave it Gregory will have good right to complain."

The instrument with which the executioner was

busying himself, and which is perhaps unknown to our readers, was a species of whip, with a handle about two feet long. A plaited leather thong, about four feet long and two inches broad, was attached to this handle, this thong terminating in an iron or copper ring, and to this another band of leather was fastened, two feet long, and at the beginning about one and a half inches thick: this gradually became thinner, till it ended in a point. The thong was steeped in milk and then dried in the sun, and on account of this method of preparation its edge became as keen and cutting as a knife; further, the thong was generally changed at every sixth stroke, because contact with blood softened it.

However unwillingly and clumsily Ivan set about untying the knot, it had to come undone at last. Besides, the bystanders were beginning to grumble, and their muttering disturbed the reverie into which the young aide-de-camp had fallen. He raised his head, which had been sunk on his breast, and cast a last look towards the window; then with a peremptory sign, and in a voice which admitted of no delay, he ordered the execution to proceed.

Nothing could put it off any longer: Ivan was obliged to obey, and he did not attempt to find any new pretext for delay. He drew back two paces, and with a spring he returned to his place, and

standing on tiptoe, he whirled the knout above his head, and then letting it suddenly fall, he struck Gregory with such dexterity that the lash wrapped itself thrice round his victim's body, encircling him like a serpent, but the tip of the thong struck the plank upon which Gregory was lying. Nevertheless, in spite of this precaution, Gregory uttered a loud shriek, and Ivan counted "One."

At the shriek, the young aide-de-camp again turned towards the window; but it was still shut, and mechanically his eyes went back to the culprit, and he repeated the word "One."

The knout had traced three blue furrows on Gregory's shoulders. Ivan took another spring, and with the same skill as before he again enveloped the culprit's body with the hissing thong, ever taking care that the tip of it should not touch him. Gregory uttered another shriek, and Ivan counted "Two." The blood now began to colour the skin.

At the third stroke several drops of blood appeared; at the fourth the blood spurted out; at the fifth some drops spattered the young officer's face; he drew back, and wiped them away with his handkerchief. Ivan profited by his distraction, and counted seven instead of six: the captain took no notice. At the ninth stroke Ivan stopped to change the lash, and in the hope that a second fraud might

pass off as luckily as the first, he counted eleven instead of ten.

At that moment a window opposite to Vaninka's opened, and a man about forty-five or fifty in general's uniform appeared. He called out in a careless tone, "Enough, that will do," and closed the window again.

Immediately on this apparition the young aide-de-camp had turned towards his general, saluting, and during the few seconds that the general was present he remained motionless. When the window had been shut again, he repeated the general's words, so that the raised whip fell without touching the culprit.

"Thank his excellency, Gregory," said Ivan, rolling the knout's lash round his hand, "for having spared you two strokes;" and he added, bending down to liberate Gregory's hand, "these two with the two I was able to miss out make a total of eight strokes instead of twelve. Come, now, you others, untie his other hand."

But poor Gregory was in no state to thank anybody; nearly swooning with pain, he could scarcely stand.

Two moujiks took him by the arms and led him towards the serfs' quarters, followed by Ivan. Having reached the door, however, Gregory stopped, turned his head, and seeing the aide-de-

camp gazing pitifully at him, "Oh sir," he cried, "please thank his excellency the general for me. As for the lady Vaninka," he added in a low tone, "I will certainly thank her myself."

"What are you muttering between your teeth?" cried the young officer, with an angry movement; for he thought he had detected a threatening tone in Gregory's voice.

"Nothing, sir, nothing," said Ivan. "The poor fellow is merely thanking you, Mr. Fœdor, for the trouble you have taken in being present at his punishment, and he says that he has been much honoured, that is all."

"That is right," said the young man, suspecting that Ivan had somewhat altered the original remarks, but evidently not wishing to be better informed. "If Gregory wishes to spare me this trouble another time, let him drink less vodka; or else, if he must get drunk, let him at least remember to be more respectful."

Ivan bowed low and followed his comrades, Fœdor entered the house again, and the crowd dispersed, much dissatisfied that Ivan's trickery and the general's generosity had deprived them of four strokes of the knout—exactly a third of the punishment.

Now that we have introduced our readers to some of the characters in this history, we must make

them better acquainted with those who have made their appearance, and must introduce those who are still behind the curtain.

General Count Tchermayloff, as we have said, after having been governor of one of the most important towns in the environs of Pultava, had been recalled to St. Petersburg by the Emperor Paul, who honoured him with his particular friendship. The general was a widower, with one daughter, who had inherited her mother's fortune, beauty, and pride. Vaninka's mother claimed descent from one of the chieftains of the Tartar race, who had invaded Russia, under the leadership of D'Gengis, in the thirteenth century. Vaninka's naturally haughty disposition had been fostered by the education she had received. His wife being dead, and not having time to look after his daughter's education himself, General Tchermayloff had procured an English governess for her. This lady, instead of suppressing her pupil's scornful propensities, had encouraged them, by filling her head with those aristocratic ideas which have made the English aristocracy the proudest in the world. Amongst the different studies to which Vaninka devoted herself, there was one in which she was specially interested, and that one was, if one may so call it, the science of her own rank. She knew exactly the relative degree of nobility and power of all the Russian

noble families—those that were a grade above her own, and those of whom she took precedence. She could give each person the title which belonged to their respective rank, no easy thing to do in Russia, and she had the greatest contempt for all those who were below the rank of excellency. As for serfs and slaves, for her they did not exist: they were mere bearded animals, far below her horse or her dog in the sentiments which they inspired in her; and she would not for one instant have weighed the life of a serf against either of those interesting animals.

Like all the women of distinction in her nation, Vaninka was a good musician, and spoke French, Italian, German, and English equally well.

Her features had developed in harmony with her character. Vaninka was beautiful, but her beauty was perhaps a little too decided. Her large black eyes, straight nose, and lips curling scornfully at the corners, impressed those who saw her for the first time somewhat unpleasantly. This impression soon wore off with her superiors and equals, to whom she became merely an ordinary charming woman, whilst to subalterns and such like she remained haughty and inaccessible as a goddess. At seventeen Vaninka's education was finished, and her governess who had suffered in health through the severe climate of St. Petersburg, requested per-

mission to leave. This desire was granted with the ostentatious recognition of which the Russian nobility are the last representatives in Europe. Thus Vaninka was left alone, with nothing but her father's blind adoration to direct her. She was his only daughter, as we have mentioned, and he thought her absolutely perfect.

Things were in this state in the general's house when he received a letter, written on the deathbed of one of the friends of his youth. Count Romayloff had been exiled to his estates, as a result of some quarrel with Potemkin, and his career had been spoilt. Not being able to recover his forfeited position, he had settled down about four hundred leagues from St. Petersburg, broken-hearted, distressed probably less on account of his own exile and misfortune than of the prospects of his only son, Fœdor. The count feeling that he was leaving this son alone and friendless in the world, commended the young man, in the name of their early friendship, to the general, hoping that, owing to his being a favourite with Paul I, he would be able to procure a lieutenancy in a regiment for him. The general immediately replied to the count that his son should find a second father in himself; but when this comforting message arrived, Romayloff was no more, and Fœdor himself received the letter and carried it back with him to the general, when

he went to tell him of his loss and to claim the promised protection. So great was the general's despatch, that Paul I, at his request, granted the young man a sub-lieutenancy in the Semonowskoi regiment, so that Fœdor entered on his duties the very next day after his arrival in St. Petersburg.

Although the young man had only passed through the general's house on his way to the barracks, which were situated in the Litenoi quarter, he had remained there long enough for him to have seen Vaninka, and she had produced a great impression upon him. Fœdor had arrived with his heart full of primitive and noble feelings; his gratitude to his protector, who had opened a career for him, was profound, and extended to all his family. These feelings caused him perhaps to have an exaggerated idea of the beauty of the young girl who was presented to him as a sister, and who, in spite of this title, received him with the frigidity and hauteur of a queen. Nevertheless, her appearance, in spite of her cool and freezing manner, had left a lasting impression upon the young man's heart, and his arrival in St. Petersburg had been marked by feelings till then never experienced before in his life.

As for Vaninka, she had hardly noticed Fœdor; for what was a young sub-lieutenant, without fortune or prospects, to her? What she dreamed of was some princely alliance, that would make her

one of the most powerful ladies in Russia, and unless he could realise some dream of the *Arabian Nights,* Fœdor could not offer her such a future.

Some time after this first interview, Fœdor came to take leave of the general. His regiment was to form part of a contingent that Field-Marshal Souvarow was taking to Italy, and Fœdor was about to die, or show himself worthy of the noble patron who had helped him to a career.

This time, whether on account of the elegant uniform that heightened Fœdor's natural good looks, or because his imminent departure, glowing with hope and enthusiasm, lent a romantic interest to the young man, Vaninka was astonished at the marvellous change in him, and deigned, at her father's request, to give him her hand when he left. This was more than Fœdor had dared to hope. He dropped upon his knee, as though in the presence of a queen, and took Vaninka's between his own trembling hands, scarcely daring to touch it with his lips. Light though the kiss had been, Vaninka started as though she had been burnt; she felt a thrill run through her, and she blushed violently. She withdrew her hand so quickly, that Fœdor, fearing this adieu, respectful though it was, had offended her, remained on his knees, and clasping his hands, raised his eyes with such an expression of fear in them, that Vaninka, forgetting her hauteur, reas-

sured him with a smile. Fœdor rose, his heart filled with inexplicable joy, and without being able to say what had caused this feeling, he only knew that it had made him absolutely happy, so that, although he was just about to leave Vaninka, he had never felt greater happiness in his life.

The young man left dreaming golden dreams; for his future, be it gloomy or bright, was to be envied. If it ended in a soldier's grave, he believed he had seen in Vaninka's eyes that she would mourn him; if his future was glorious, glory would bring him back to St. Petersburg in triumph, and glory is a queen, who works miracles for her favourites.

The army to which the young officer belonged crossed Germany, descended into Italy by the Tyrolese mountains, and entered Verona on the 14th of April 1799. Souvarow immediately joined forces with General Mélas, and took command of the two armies. General Chasteler next day suggested that they should reconnoitre. Souvarow, gazing at him with astonishment, replied, "I know of no other way of reconnoitring the enemy than by marching upon him and giving him battle."

As a matter of fact Souvarow was accustomed to this expeditious sort of strategy: through it he had defeated the Turks at Folkschany and Ismailoff; and he had defeated the Poles, after a few days' campaign, and had taken Prague in less than four

hours. Catherine, out of gratitude, had sent her victorious general a wreath of oak-leaves, intertwined with precious stones, and worth six hundred thousand roubles, a heavy gold field-marshal's baton encrusted with diamonds; and had created him a field-marshal, with the right of choosing a regiment that should bear his name from that time forward. Besides, when he returned to Russia, she gave him leave of absence, that he might take a holiday at a beautiful estate she had given him, together with the eight thousand serfs who lived upon it.

What a splendid example for Fœdor! Souvarow, the son of a humble Russian officer, had been educated at the ordinary cadets' training college, and had left it as a sub-lieutenant like himself. Why should there not be two Souvarows in the same century?

Souvarow arrived in Italy preceded by an immense reputation; religious, strenuous, unwearied, impassible, loving with the simplicity of a Tartar and fighting with the fury of a Cossack, he was just the man required to continue General Mélas's successes over the soldiers of the Republic, discouraged as they had been by the weak vacillations of Scherer.

The Austro-Russian army of one hundred thousand men was opposed by only twenty-nine or thirty thousand French. Souvarow began as usual with

a thundering blow. On 20th April he appeared before Brescia, which made a vain attempt at resistance; after a cannonade of about half an hour's duration, the Preschiera gate was forced, and the Korsakow division, of which Fœdor's regiment formed the vanguard, charged into the town, pursuing the garrison, which only consisted of twelve hundred men, and obliged them to take refuge in the citadel. Pressed with an impetuosity the French were not accustomed to find in their enemies, and seeing that the scaling ladders were already in position against the ramparts, the captain Boucret wished to come to terms; but his position was too precarious for him to obtain any conditions from his savage conquerors, and he and his soldiers were made prisoners of war.

Souvarow was experienced enough to know how best to profit by victory; hardly master of Brescia, the rapid occupation of which had discouraged our army anew, he ordered General Kray to vigorously press on the siege of Preschiera. General Kray therefore established his headquarters at Valeggio, a place situated at an equal distance between Preschiera and Mantua, and he extended from the Po to the lake of Garda, on the banks of the Mencio, thus investing the two cities at the same time.

Meanwhile the commander-in-chief had advanced, accompanied by the larger part of his forces, and

had crossed the Oglio in two columns: he launched one column, under General Rosenberg, towards Bergamo, and the other, with General Mélas in charge, towards the Serio, whilst a body of seven or eight thousand men, commanded by General Kaïm and General Hohenzollern, were directed towards Placentia and Cremona, thus occupying the whole of the left bank of the Po, in such a manner that the Austro-Russian army advanced deploying eighty thousand men along a front of forty-five miles.

In view of the forces which were advancing, and which were three times as large as his own, Scherer beat a retreat all along the line. He destroyed the bridges over the Adda, as he did not consider that he was strong enough to hold them, and, having removed his headquarters to Milan, he awaited there the reply to a despatch which he had sent to the Directory, in which, tacitly acknowledging his incapacity, he tendered his resignation. As the arrival of his successor was delayed, and as Souvarow continued to advance, Scherer, more and more terrified by the responsibility which rested upon him, relinquished his command into the hands of his most able lieutenant. The general chosen by him was Moreau, who was again about to fight those Russians in whose ranks he was destined to die at last.

Moreau's unexpected nomination was proclaimed amidst the acclamation of the soldiers. He had been called the French Fabius, on account of his magnificent campaign on the Rhine. He passed his whole army in review, saluted by the successive acclamations of its different divisions, which cried, "Long live Moreau! Long live the saviour of the army of Italy!" But however great this enthusiasm, it did not blind Moreau to the terrible position in which he found himself. At the risk of being out-flanked, it was necessary for him to present a parallel line to that of the Russian army, so that, in order to face his enemy, he was obliged to extend his line from Lake Lecco to Pizzighitone—that is to say, a distance of fifty miles. It is true that he might have retired towards Piedmont and concentrated his troops at Alexandria, to await there the reinforcements the Directory had promised to send him. But if he had done this, he would have compromised the safety of the army at Naples, and have abandoned it, isolated as it was, to the mercy of the enemy. He therefore resolved to defend the passage of the Adda as long as possible, in order to give the division under Dessolles, which was to be despatched to him by Masséna, time to join forces with him and to defend his left, whilst Gauthier, who had received orders to evacuate Tuscany and to hasten with forced marches to his aid, should

have time to arrive and protect his right. Moreau himself took the centre, and personally defended the fortified bridge of Cassano; this bridge was protected by the Ritorto Canal, and he also defended it with a great deal of artillery and an entrenched vanguard. Besides, Moreau, always as prudent as brave, took every precaution to secure a retreat, in case of disaster, towards the Apennines and the coast of Genoa. Hardly were his dispositions completed before the indefatigable Souvarow entered Triveglio. At the same time as the Russian commander-in-chief arrived at this last town, Moreau heard of the surrender of Bergamo and its castle, and on 23rd April he saw the heads of the columns of the allied army.

The same day the Russian general divided his troops into three strong columns, corresponding to the three principal points in the French line, each column numerically more than double the strength of those to whom they were opposed. The right column, led by General Wukassowich, advanced towards Lake Lecco, where General Serrurier awaited it. The left column, under the command of Mélas, took up its position in front of the Cassano entrenchments; and the Austrian division, under Generals Zopf and Ott, which formed the centre, concentrated at Canonia, ready at a given moment to seize Vaprio. The Russian and Austrian troops

bivouacked within cannon-shot of the French outposts.

That evening, Fœdor, who with his regiment formed part of Chasteler's division, wrote to General Tchermayloff:—

"We are at last opposite the French, and a great battle must take place to-morrow morning; to-morrow evening I shall be a lieutenant or a corpse."

Next morning, 26th April, cannon resounded at break of day from the extremities of the lines; on our left Prince Bagration's grenadiers attacked us, on our right General Seckendorff, who had been detached from the camp of Triveglio, was marching on Créma.

These two attacks met with very different success. Bagration's grenadiers were repulsed with terrible loss, whilst Seckendorff, on the contrary, drove the French out of Créma, and pushed forward towards the bridge of Lodi. Fœdor's predictions were falsified: his portion of the army did nothing the whole day; his regiment remained motionless, waiting for orders that did not come.

Souvarow's arrangements were not yet quite complete, the night was needed for him to finish them. During the night, Moreau, having heard of Seckendorff's success on his extreme right, sent an order to Serrurier commanding him to leave at Lecco,

which was an easy post to defend, the 18th light brigade and a detachment of dragoons only, and to draw back with the rest of his troops towards the centre. Serrurier received this order about two o'clock in the morning, and executed it immediately.

On their side the Russians had lost no time, profiting by the darkness of the night. General Wukassowich had repaired the bridge at Brevio, which had been destroyed by the French, whilst General Chasteler had built another bridge two miles below the castle of Trezzo. These two bridges had been, the one repaired and the other built, without the French outposts having the slightest suspicion of what was taking place.

Surprised at two o'clock in the morning by two Austrian divisions, which, concealed by the village of San Gervasio, had reached the right bank of the Adda without their being discovered, the soldiers defending the castle of Trezzo abandoned it and beat a retreat. The Austrians pursued them as far as Pozzo, but there the French suddenly halted and faced about, for General Serrurier was at Pozzo, with the troops he had brought from Lecco. He heard the cannonade behind him, immediately halted, and, obeying the first law of warfare, he marched towards the noise and smoke. It was therefore through him that the garrison of Trezzo rallied and resumed the offensive. Serrurier sent an aide-de-

camp to Moreau to inform him of the manœuvre he had thought proper to execute.

The battle between the French and Austrian troops raged with incredible fury. Bonaparte's veterans, during their first Italian campaigns, had adopted a custom which they could not renounce: it was to fight His Imperial Majesty's subjects wherever they found them. Nevertheless, so great was the numerical superiority of the allies, that our troops had begun to retreat, when loud shouts from the rearguard announced that reinforcements had arrived. It was General Grenier, sent by Moreau, who arrived with his division at the moment when his presence was most necessary.

One part of the new division reinforced the centre column, doubling its size; another part was extended upon the left to envelop the enemy. The drums beat afresh down the whole line, and our grenadiers began again to reconquer this battlefield already twice lost and won. But at this moment the Austrians were reinforced by the Marquis de Chasteler and his division, so that the numerical superiority was again with the enemy. Grenier drew back his wing to strengthen the centre, and Serrurier, preparing for retreat in case of disaster, fell back on Pozzo, where he awaited the enemy. It was here that the battle raged most fiercely: thrice the village of Pozzo was taken and re-taken, until

at last, attacked for the fourth time by a force double their own in numbers, the French were obliged to evacuate it. In this last attack an Austrian colonel was mortally wounded, but, on the other hand, General Beker, who commanded the French rearguard, refused to retreat with his soldiers, and maintained his ground with a few men, who were slain as they stood; he was at length obliged to give up his sword to a young Russian officer of the Semenofskoi regiment, who, handing over his prisoner to his own soldiers, returned immediately to the combat.

The two French generals had fixed on the village of Vaprio as a rallying-place, but at the moment when our troops were thrown into disorder through the evacuation of Pozzo, the Austrian cavalry charged heavily, and Serrurier, finding himself separated from his colleague, was obliged to retire with two thousand five hundred men to Verderio, whilst Grenier, having reached the appointed place, Vaprio, halted to face the enemy afresh.

During this time a terrible fight was taking place in the centre. Mélas with eighteen to twenty thousand men had attacked the fortified posts at the head of the bridge of Cassano and the Ritorto Canal. About seven o'clock in the morning, when Moreau had weakened himself by despatching Grenier and his division, Mélas, leading three battalions of Aus-

trian grenadiers, had attacked the fortifications, and for two hours there was terrible carnage; thrice repulsed, and leaving more than fifteen hundred men at the base of the fortifications, the Austrians had thrice returned to the attack, each time being reinforced by fresh troops, always led on and encouraged by Mélas, who had to avenge his former defeats. At length, having been attacked for the fourth time, forced from their entrenchments, and contesting the ground inch by inch, the French took shelter behind their second fortifications, which defended the entrance to the bridge itself: here they were commanded by Moreau in person. There, for two more hours, a hand-to-hand struggle took place, whilst the terrible artillery belched forth death almost muzzle to muzzle. At last the Austrians, rallying for a last time, advanced at the point of the bayonet, and, lacking either ladders or fascines, piled the bodies of their dead comrades against the fortifications, and succeeded in scaling the breastworks. There was not a moment to be lost. Moreau ordered a retreat, and whilst the French were re-crossing the Adda, he protected their passage in person with a single battalion of grenadiers, of whom at the end of half an hour not more than a hundred and twenty men remained; three of his aides-de-camp were killed at his side. This retreat was accomplished without disorder, and then Mo-

reau himself retired, still fighting the enemy, who set foot on the bridge as soon as he reached the other bank. The Austrians immediately rushed forward to capture him, when suddenly a terrible noise was heard rising above the roar of the artillery; the second arch of the bridge was blown into the air, carrying with it all those who were standing on the fatal spot. The armies recoiled, and into the empty space between them fell like rain a débris of stones and human beings. But at this moment, when Moreau had succeeded in putting a momentary obstacle between himself and Mélas, General Grenier's division arrived in disorder, after having been forced to evacuate Vaprio, pursued by the Austro-Russians under Zopf, Ott, and Chasteler. Moreau ordered a change of front, and faced this new enemy, who fell upon him when he least expected them; he succeeded in rallying Grenier's troops and in re-establishing the battle. But whilst his back was turned Mélas repaired the bridge and crossed the river; thus Moreau found himself attacked frontally, in the rear, and on his two flanks, by forces three times larger than his own. It was then that all the officers who surrounded him begged him to retreat, for on the preservation of his person depended the preservation of Italy for France. Moreau refused for some time, for he knew the awful consequences of the battle he had just lost,

and he did not wish to survive it, although it had been impossible for him to win it. At last a chosen band surrounded him, and, forming a square, drew back, whilst the rest of the army sacrificed themselves to cover his retreat; for Moreau's genius was looked upon as the sole hope that remained to them.

The battle lasted nearly three hours longer, during which the rearguard of the army performed prodigies of valour. At length Mélas, seeing that the enemy had escaped him, and believing that his troops, tired by the stubborn fight, needed rest, gave orders that the fighting should cease. He halted on the left bank of the Adda, encamping his army in the villages of Imago, Gorgonzola, and Cassano, and remained master of the battlefield, upon which we had left two thousand five hundred dead, one hundred pieces of cannon, and twenty howitzers.

That night Souvarow invited General Becker to supper with him, and asked him by whom he had been taken prisoner. Becker replied that it was a young officer belonging to the regiment which had first entered Pozzo. Souvarow immediately inquired what regiment this was, and discovered that it was the Semenofskoi; he then ordered that inquiries should be made to ascertain the young officer's name. Shortly afterwards Sub-Lieutenant Fœdor Romayloff was announced. He presented

General Becker's sword to Souvarow, who invited him to remain and to have supper with his prisoner.

Next day Fœdor wrote to his protector: "I have kept my word. I am a lieutenant, and Field-Marshal Souvarow has requested his Majesty Paul I to bestow upon me the order of Saint Vladimir."

On 28th of April, Souvarow entered Milan, which Moreau had just abandoned in order to retreat beyond Tesino. The following proclamation was by his order posted on all the walls of the capital; it admirably paints the spirit of the Muscovite:—

"The victorious army of the Apostolical and Roman Emperor is here; it has fought solely for the restoration of the Holy Faith, the clergy, nobility, and ancient government of Italy. People, join us for God and the Faith, for we have arrived with an army at Milan and Placentia to assist you!"

The dearly bought victories of Trebia and Novi succeeded that of Cassano, and left Souvarow so much weakened that he was unable to profit by them. Besides, just when the Russian general was about to resume his march, a new plan of campaign arrived, sent by the Aulic Council at Vienna. The Allied Powers had decided upon the invasion of France, and had fixed the route each general must follow in order to accomplish this new project. It was decided that Souvarow should invade France by Switzerland, and that the arch-duke should

yield him his positions and descend on the Lower Rhine.

The troops with which Souvarow was to operate against Massena from this time were the thirty thousand Russians he had with him, thirty thousand others detached from the reserve army commanded by Count Tolstoy in Galicia, who were to be led to join him in Switzerland by General Korsakoff, about thirty thousand Austrians under General Hotze, and lastly, five or six thousand French emigrants under the Prince de Condé—in all, an army of ninety or ninety-five thousand men. The Austrians were to oppose Moreau and Macdonald.

Fœdor had been wounded when entering Novi, but Souvarow had rewarded him with a second cross, and the rank of captain hastened his convalescence, so that the young officer, more happy than proud of the new rank he had received, was in a condition to follow the army, when on 13th September it moved towards Salvedra and entered the valley of Tesino.

So far all had gone well, and as long as they remained in the rich and beautiful Italian plains, Suovarow had nothing but praise for the courage and devotion of his soldiers. But when to the fertile fields of Lombardy, watered by its beautiful river, succeeded the rough ways of the Levantine, and when the lofty summits of the St. Gothard,

covered with the eternal snows, rose before them, their enthusiasm was quenched, their energy disappeared, and melancholy forebodings filled the hearts of these savage children of the North.

Unexpected grumblings ran through the ranks; then suddenly the vanguard stopped, and declared that it would go no farther. In vain Fœdor, who commanded a company, begged and entreated his own men to set an example by continuing the march: they threw down their arms, and lay down beside them. Just as they had given this proof of insubordination, fresh murmurs, sounding like an approaching storm, rose from the rear of the army: they were caused by the sight of Souvarow, who was riding from the rear to the vanguard, and who arrived at the front accompanied by this terrible proof of mutiny and insubordination. When he reached the head of the column, the murmurings had developed into imprecations.

Then Souvarow addressed his soldiers with that savage eloquence to which he owed the miracles he had effected with them, but cries of "Retreat! Retreat!" drowned his voice. Then he chose out the most mutinous, and had them thrashed until they were overcome by this shameful punishment. But the thrashings had no more influence than the exhortation, and the shouts continued. Souvarow saw that all was lost if he did not employ some

powerful and unexpected means of regaining the mutineers. He advanced towards Fœdor. "Captain," said he, "leave these fools here, take eight non-commissioned officers and dig a grave." Fœdor, astonished, gazed at his general as though demanding an explanation of this strange order. "Obey orders," said Souvarow.

Fœdor obeyed, and the eight men set to work; and ten minutes later the grave was dug, greatly to the astonishment of the whole army, which had gathered in a semicircle on the rising slopes of the two hills which bordered the road, standing as if on the steps of a huge amphitheatre.

Souvarow dismounted from his horse, broke his sword in two and threw it into the grave, detached his epaulets one by one and threw them after his sword, dragged off the decorations which covered his breast and cast these after the sword and epaulets, and then, stripping himself naked, he lay down in the grave himself, crying in a loud voice—

"Cover me with earth! Leave your general here. You are no longer my children, and I am no longer your father; nothing remains to me but death."

At these strange words, which were uttered in so powerful a voice that they were heard by the whole army, the Russian grenadiers threw themselves weeping into the grave, and, raising their general,

asked pardon of him, entreating him to lead them again against the enemy.

"At last," cried Souvarow, "I recognise my children again. To the enemy!"

Not cries but yells of joy greeted his words. Souvarow dressed himself again, and whilst he was dressing the leaders of the mutiny crept in the dust to kiss his feet. Then, when his epaulets were replaced on his shoulders, and when his decorations again shone on his breast, he remounted his horse, followed by the army, the soldiers swearing with one voice that they would all die rather than abandon their father.

The same day Souvarow attacked Aerolo; but his luck had turned: the conqueror of Cassano, Trebia, and Novi had left his good-fortune behind in the plains of Italy. For twelve hours six hundred French opposed three thousand Russian grenadiers beneath the walls of the town, and so successfully that night fell without Souvarow being able to defeat them. Next day he marched the whole of his troops against this handful of brave men, but the sky clouded over and the wind blew a bitter rain into the faces of the Russians; the French profited by this circumstance to beat a retreat, evacuating the valley of Ursern, crossing the Reuss, and taking up their position on the heights of the Furka and Grimsel. One portion of the Russian army's design

had been achieved, they were masters of the St. Gothard. It is true that as soon as they marched farther on, the French would retake it and cut off their retreat; but what did this matter to Souvarow? Did he not always march forward?

He marched on, then, without worrying about that which was behind him, reached Andermatt, cleared Trou d'Ury, and found Lecourbe guarding the defile of the Devil's Bridge with fifteen hundred men. There the struggle began again; for three days fifteen hundred Frenchmen kept thirty thousand Russians at bay. Souvarow raged like a lion trapped in a snare, for he could not understand this change of fortune. At last, on the fourth day, he heard that General Korsakoff, who had preceded him and who was to rejoin him later, had been beaten by Molitor, and that Massena had recaptured Zurich and occupied the canton of Glaris. Souvarow now gave up the attempt to proceed up the valley of the Reuss, and wrote to Korsakoff and Jallachieh, "I hasten to retrieve your losses; stand firm as ramparts: you shall answer to me with your heads for every step in retreat that you take." The aide-de-camp was also charged to communicate to the Russian and Austrian generals a verbal plan of battle. Generals Linsken and Jallachieh were to attack the French troops separately and then to join the forces in the valley of Glaris, into which Sou-

varow himself was to descend by the Klon-Thal, thus hemming Molitor in between two walls of iron.

Souvarow was so sure that this plan would be successful, that when he arrived on the borders of the lake of Klon-Thal, he sent a bearer with a flag of truce, summoning Molitor to surrender, seeing that he was surrounded on every side.

Molitor replied to the field-marshal that his proposed meeting with his generals had failed, as he had beaten them one after the other, and driven them back into the Grisons, and that moreover, in retaliation, as Massena was advancing by Muotta, it was he, Souvarow, who was between two fires, and therefore he called upon him to lay down his arms instead.

On hearing this strange reply, Souvarow thought that he must be dreaming, but soon recovering himself and realising the danger of his position in the defiles, he threw himself on General Molitor, who received him at the point of the bayonet, and then closing up the pass with twelve hundred men, the French succeeded in holding fifteen to eighteen thousand Russians in check for eight hours. At length night came, and Molitor evacuated the Klon-Thal, and retired towards the Linth, to defend the bridges of Nœfels and Mollis.

The old field-marshal rushed like a torrent over

Glaris and Miltodi; there he learnt that Molitor had told him the truth, and that Jallachieh and Linsken had been beaten and dispersed, that Massena was advancing on Schwitz, and that General Rosenberg, who had been given the defence of the bridge of Muotta, had been forced to retreat, so that he found himself in the position in which he had hoped to place Molitor.

No time was to be lost in retreating. Souvarow hurried through the passes of Engi, Schwauden, and Elm. His flight was so hurried that he was obliged to abandon his wounded and part of his artillery. Immediately the French rushed in pursuit among the precipices and clouds. One saw whole armies passing over places where chamois-hunters took off their shoes and walked barefoot, holding on by their hands to prevent themselves from falling. Three nations had come from three different parts to a meeting-place in the home of the eagles, as if to allow those nearest God to judge the justice of their cause. There were times when the frozen mountains changed into volcanoes, when cascades now filled with blood fell into the valleys, and avalanches of human beings rolled down the deepest precipices. Death reaped such a harvest there where human life had never been before, that the vultures, becoming fastidious through the abundance, picked out only the eyes of the corpses to

carry to their young—at least so says the tradition of the peasants of these mountains.

Souvarow was able to rally his troops at length in the neighbourhood of Lindau. He recalled Korsakoff, who still occupied Bregenz; but all his troops together did not number more than thirty thousand men—all that remained of the eighty thousand whom Paul had furnished as his contingent in the coalition. In fifteen days Masséna had defeated three separate armies, each numerically stronger than his own. Souvarow, furious at having been defeated by these same Republicans whom he had sworn to exterminate, blamed the Austrians for his defeat, and declared that he awaited orders from his emperor, to whom he had made known the treachery of the allies, before attempting anything further with the coalition.

Paul's answer was that he should immediately return to Russia with his soldiers, arriving at St. Petersburg as soon as possible, where a triumphal entry awaited them.

The same ukase declared that Souvarow should be quartered in the imperial palace for the rest of his life, and lastly that a monument should be raised to him in one of the public places of St. Petersburg.

Fœdor was thus about to see Vaninka once more. Throughout the campaign, where there was a chance of danger, whether in the plains of Italy, in the de-

files of Tesino, or on the glaciers of Mount Pragal, he was the first to throw himself into it, and his name had frequently been mentioned as worthy of distinction. Souvarow was too brave himself to be prodigal of honours where they were not merited. Fœdor was returning, as he had promised, worthy of his noble protector's friendship, and who knows, perhaps worthy of Vaninka's love. Field-Marshal Souvarow had made a friend of him, and none could know to what this friendship might not lead; for Paul honoured Souvarow like one of the ancient heroes.

But no one could rely upon Paul, for his character was made up of extreme impulses. Without having done anything to offend his master, and without knowing the cause of his disgrace, Souvarow, on arriving at Riga, received a private letter which informed him, in the emperor's name, that, having tolerated an infraction of the laws of discipline among his soldiers, the emperor deprived him of all the honours with which he had been invested, and also forbade him to appear before him.

Such tidings fell like a thunderbolt upon the old warrior, already embittered by his reverses: he was heart-broken that such storm-clouds should tarnish the end of his glorious day.

In consequence of this order, he assembled all his officers in the market-place of Riga, and took leave

of them sorrowfully, like a father taking leave of his family. Having embraced the generals and colonels, and having shaken hands with the others, he said good-bye to them once more, and left them free to continue their march to their destination.

Souvarow took a sledge, and, travelling night and day, arrived incognito in the capital, which he was to have entered in triumph, and was driven to a distant suburb, to the house of one of his nieces, where he died of a broken heart fifteen days afterwards.

On his own account, Fœdor travelled almost as rapidly as his general, and entered St. Petersburg without having sent any letter to announce his arrival. As he had no parent in the capital, and as his entire existence was concentrated in one person, he drove direct to the general's house, which was situated in the Prospect of Niewski, at an angle of the Catherine Canal.

Having arrived there, he sprang out of his carriage, entered the courtyard, and bounded up the steps. He opened the ante-chamber door, and precipitated himself into the midst of the servants and subordinate household officers. They cried out with surprise upon seeing him: he asked them where the general was; they replied by pointing to the door of the dining-room; he was in there, breakfasting with his daughter.

Then, through a strange reaction, Fœdor felt his knees failing him, and he was obliged to lean against a wall to prevent himself from falling. At this moment, when he was about to see Vaninka again, this soul of his soul, for whom alone he had done so much, he dreaded lest he should not find her the same as when he had left her. Suddenly the dining-room door opened, and Vaninka appeared. Seeing the young man, she uttered a cry, and, turning to the general, said, "Father, it is Fœdor"; and the expression of her voice left no doubt of the sentiment which inspired it.

"Fœdor!" cried the general, springing forward and holding out his arms.

Fœdor did not know whether to throw himself at the feet of Vaninka or into the arms of her father. He felt that his first recognition ought to be devoted to respect and gratitude, and threw himself into the general's arms. Had he acted otherwise, it would have been an avowal of his love, and he had no right to avow this love till he knew that it was reciprocated.

Fœdor then turned, and as at parting, sank on his knee before Vaninka; but a moment had sufficed for the haughty girl to banish the feeling she had shown. The blush which had suffused her cheek had disappeared, and she had become again cold and haughty like an alabaster statue—a masterpiece

of pride begun by nature and finished by education. Fœdor kissed her hand; it was trembling but cold: he felt his heart sink, and thought he was about to die.

"Why, Vaninka," said the general—"why are you so cool to a friend who has caused us so much anxiety and yet so much pleasure? Come, Fœdor, kiss my daughter."

Fœdor rose entreatingly, but waited motionless, that another permission might confirm that of the general.

"Did you not hear my father?" said Vaninka, smiling, but nevertheless possessing sufficient self-control to prevent the emotion she was feeling from appearing in her voice.

Fœdor stooped to kiss Vaninka, and as he held her hands it seemed to him that she lightly pressed his own with a nervous, involuntary movement. A feeble cry of joy nearly escaped him, when, suddenly looking at Vaninka, he was astonished at her pallor: her lips were as white as death.

The general made Fœdor sit down at the table: Vaninka took her place again, and as by chance she was seated with her back to the light, the general noticed nothing.

Breakfast passed in relating and listening to an account of this strange campaign which began under the burning sun of Italy and ended in the glaciers

of Switzerland. As there are no journals in St. Petersburg which publish anything other than that which is permitted by the emperor, Souvarow's successes were spread abroad, but his reverses were ignored. Fœdor described the former with modesty and the latter with frankness.

One can imagine the immense interest the general took in Fœdor's story. His two captain's epaulets and the decorations on his breast proved that the young man had modestly suppressed his own part in the story he had told. But the general, too courageous to fear that he might share in Souvarow's disgrace, had already visited the dying field-marshal, and had heard from him an account of his young protégé's bravery. Therefore, when Fœdor had finished his story, it was the general's turn to enumerate all the fine things Fœdor had done in a campaign of less than a year. Having finished this enumeration, he added that he intended next day to ask the emperor's permission to take the young captain for his aide-de-camp. Fœdor hearing this wished to throw himself at the general's feet, but he received him again in his arms, and to show Fœdor how certain he was that he would be successful in his request, he fixed the rooms that the young man was to occupy in the house at once.

The next day the general returned from the pal-

ace of St. Michel with the pleasant news that his request had been granted.

Fœdor was overwhelmed with joy: from this time he was to form part of the general's family. Living under the same roof as Vaninka, seeing her constantly, meeting her frequently in the rooms, seeing her pass like an apparition at the end of a corridor, finding himself twice a day at the same table with her, all this was more than Fœdor had ever dared hope, and he thought for a time that he had attained complete happiness.

For her part, Vaninka, although she was so proud, at the bottom of her heart took a keen interest in Fœdor. He had left her with the certainty that he loved her, and during his absence her woman's pride had been gratified by the glory he had acquired, in the hope of bridging the distance which separated them. So that, when she saw him return with this distance between them lessened, she felt by the beating of her heart that gratified pride was changing into a more tender sentiment, and that for her part she loved Fœdor as much as it was possible for her to love anyone.

She had nevertheless concealed these feelings under an appearance of haughty indifference, for Vaninka was made so: she intended to let Fœdor know some day that she loved him, but until the time came when it pleased her to reveal it, she did

not wish the young man to discover her love. Things went on in this way for several months, and the circumstances which had at first appeared to Fœdor as the height of happiness soon became awful torture.

To love and to feel his heart ever on the point of avowing its love, to be from morning till night in the company of the beloved one, to meet her hand at the table, to touch her dress in a narrow corridor, to feel her leaning on his arm when they entered a salon or left a ballroom, always to have ceaselessly to control every word, look, or movement which might betray his feelings, no human power could endure such a struggle.

Vaninka saw that Fœdor could not keep his secret much longer, and determined to anticipate the avowal which she saw every moment on the point of escaping his heart.

One day when they were alone, and she saw the hopeless efforts the young man was making to hide his feelings from her, she went straight up to him, and, looking at him fixedly, said—

"You love me!"

"Forgive me, forgive me," cried the young man, clasping his hands.

"Why should you ask me to forgive you, Fœdor? Is not your love genuine?"

"Yes, yes, genuine but hopeless."

"Why hopeless? Does not my father love you as a son?" said Vaninka.

"Oh, what do you mean?" cried Fœdor. "Do you mean that if your father will bestow your hand upon me, that you will then consent——?"

"Are you not both noble in heart and by birth, Fœdor? You are not wealthy, it is true, but then I am rich enough for both."

"Then I am not indifferent to you?"

"I at least prefer you to anyone else I have met."

"Vaninka!" The young girl drew herself away proudly.

"Forgive me!" said Fœdor. "What am I doing? You have but to order: I have no wish apart from you. I dread lest I shall offend you. Tell me what to do, and I will obey."

"The first thing you must do, Fœdor, is to ask my father's consent."

"So you will allow me to take this step?"

"Yes, but on one condition."

"What is it? Tell me."

"My father, whatever his answer, must never know that I have consented to your making this application to him; no one must know that you are following my instructions; the world must remain ignorant of the confession I have just made to you; and, lastly, you must not ask me, whatever happens,

to help you in any other way than with my good wishes."

"Whatever you please. I will do everything you wish me to do. Do you not grant me a thousand times more than I dared hope, and if your father refuses me, do I not know myself that you are sharing my grief?" cried Fœdor.

"Yes; but that will not happen, I hope," said Vaninka, holding out her hand to the young officer, who kissed it passionately.

"Now be hopeful and take courage;" and Vaninka retired, leaving the young man a hundred times more agitated and moved than she was herself, woman though she was.

The same day Fœdor asked for an interview with the general. The general received his aide-de-camp as usual with a genial and smiling countenance, but with the first words Fœdor uttered his face darkened. However, when he heard the young man's description of the love, so true, constant, and passionate, that he felt for Vaninka, and when he heard that this passion had been the motive power of those glorious deeds he had praised so often, he held out his hand to Fœdor, almost as moved as the young soldier.

And then the general told him, that while he had been away, and ignorant of his love for Vaninka, in whom he had observed no trace of its being

reciprocated, he had, at the emperor's desire, promised her hand to the son of a privy councillor. The only stipulation that the general had made was, that he should not be separated from his daughter until she had attained the age of eighteen. Vaninka had only five months more to spend under her father's roof. Nothing more could be said: in Russia the emperor's wish is an order, and from the moment that it is expressed, no subject would oppose it, even in thought. However, the refusal had imprinted such despair on the young man's face, that the general, touched by his silent and resigned sorrow, held out his arms to him. Fœdor flung himself into them with loud sobs.

Then the general questioned him about his daughter, and Fœdor answered, as he had promised, that Vaninka was ignorant of everything, and that the proposal came from him alone, without her knowledge. This assurance calmed the general: he had feared that he was making two people wretched.

At dinner-time Vaninka came downstairs and found her father alone. Fœdor had not enough courage to be present at the meal and to meet her again, just when he had lost all hope: he had taken a sleigh, and driven out to the outskirts of the city.

During the whole time dinner lasted Vaninka and the general hardly exchanged a word, but although this silence was so expressive, Vaninka con-

trolled her face with her usual power, and the general alone appeared sad and dejected.

That evening, just when Vaninka was going downstairs, tea was brought to her room, with the message that the general was fatigued and had retired. Vaninka asked some questions about the nature of his indisposition, and finding that it was not serious, she told the servant who had brought her the message to ask her father to send for her if he wanted anything. The general sent to say that he thanked her, but he only required quiet and rest. Vaninka announced that she would retire also, and the servant withdrew.

Hardly had he left the room when Vaninka ordered Annouschka, her foster-sister, who acted as her maid, to be on the watch for Fœdor's return, and to let her know as soon as he came in.

At eleven o'clock the gate of the mansion opened: Fœdor got out of his sleigh, and immediately went up to his room. He threw himself upon a sofa, overwhelmed by his thoughts. About midnight he heard someone tapping at the door: much astonished, he got up and opened it. It was Annouschka, who came with a message from her mistress, that Vaninka wished to see him immediately. Although he was astonished at this message, which he was far from expecting, Fœdor obeyed.

He found Vaninka seated, dressed in a white

robe, and as she was paler than usual he stopped at the door, for it seemed to him that he was gazing at a marble statue.

"Come in," said Vaninka calmly.

Fœdor approached, drawn by her voice like steel to a magnet. Annouschka shut the door behind him.

"Well, and what did my father say?" said Vaninka.

Fœdor told her all that had happened. The young girl listened to his story with an unmoved countenance, but her lips, the only part of her face which seemed to have any colour, became as white as the dressing-gown she was wearing. Fœdor, on the contrary, was consumed by a fever, and appeared nearly out of his senses.

"Now, what do you intend to do?" said Vaninka in the same cold tone in which she had asked the other questions.

"You ask me what I intend to do, Vaninka? What do you wish me to do? What can I do, but flee from St. Petersburg, and seek death in the first corner of Russia where war may break out, in order not to repay my patron's kindness by some infamous baseness?"

"You are a fool," said Vaninka, with a mixed smile of triumph and contempt; for from that moment she felt her superiority over Fœdor, and saw

that she would rule him like a queen for the rest of her life.

"Then order me—am I not your slave?" cried the young soldier.

"You must stay here," said Vaninka.

"Stay here?"

"Yes; only women and children will thus confess themselves beaten at the first blow: a man, if he be worthy of the name, fights."

"Fight!—against whom?—against your father? Never!"

"Who suggested that you should contend against my father? It is against events that you must strive; for the generality of men do not govern events, but are carried away by them. Appear to my father as though you were fighting against your love, and he will think that you have mastered yourself. As I am supposed to be ignorant of your proposal, I shall not be suspected. I will demand two years' more freedom, and I shall obtain them. Who knows what may happen in the course of two years? The emperor may die, my betrothed may die, my father—may God protect him!—my father himself may die——!"

"But if they force you to marry?"

"Force me!" interrupted Vaninka, and a deep flush rose to her cheek and immediately disappeared again. "And who will force me to do anything?

Father? He loves me too well. The emperor? He has enough worries in his own family, without introducing them into another's. Besides, there is always a last resource when every other expedient fails: the Neva only flows a few paces from here, and its waters are deep."

Fœdor uttered a cry, for in the young girl's knit brows and tightly compressed lips there was so much resolution that he understood that they might break this child but that they would not bend her. But Fœdor's heart was too much in harmony with the plan Vaninka had proposed; his objections once removed, he did not seek fresh ones. Besides, had he had the courage to do so, Vaninka's promise to make up in secret to him for the dissimulation she was obliged to practise in public would have conquered his last scruples.

Vaninka, whose determined character had been accentuated by her education, had an unbounded influence over all who came in contact with her; even the general, without knowing why, obeyed her. Fœdor submitted like a child to everything she wished, and the young girl's love was increased by the wishes she opposed and by a feeling of gratified pride.

It was some days after this nocturnal decision that the knouting had taken place at which our readers have assisted. It was for some slight fault,

and Gregory had been the victim, Vaninka having complained to her father about him. Fœdor, who as aide-de-camp had been obliged to preside over Gregory's punishment, had paid no more attention to the threats the serf had uttered on retiring.

Ivan, the coachman, who after having been executioner had become surgeon, had applied compresses of salt and water to heal up the scarred shoulders of his victim. Gregory had remained three days in the infirmary, and during this time he had turned over in his mind every possible means of vengeance. Then at the end of three days, being healed, he had returned to his duty, and soon everyone except he had forgotten the punishment. If Gregory had been a real Russian, he would soon have forgotten it all; for this punishment is too familiar to the rough Muscovite for him to remember it long and with rancour. Gregory, as we have said, had Greek blood in his veins; he dissembled and remembered. Although Gregory was a serf, his duties had little by little brought him into greater familiarity with the general than any of the other servants. Besides, in every country in the world barbers have great licence with those they shave; this is perhaps due to the fact that a man is instinctively more gracious to another who for ten minutes every day holds his life in his hands. Gregory rejoiced in the immunity of his profession, and it

nearly always happened that the barber's daily operation on the general's chin passed in conversation, of which he bore the chief part.

One day the general had to attend a review: he sent for Gregory before daybreak, and as the barber was passing the razor as gently as possible over his master's cheek, the conversation fell, or more likely was led, on Fœdor. The barber praised him highly, and this naturally caused his master to ask him, remembering the correction the young aide-de-camp had superintended, if he could not find some fault in this model of perfection that might counterbalance so many good qualities. Gregory replied that with the exception of pride he thought Fœdor irreproachable.

"Pride?" asked the astonished general. "That is a failing from which I should have thought him most free."

"Perhaps I should have said ambition," replied Gregory.

"Ambition!" said the general. "It does not seem to me that he has given much proof of ambition in entering my service; for after his achievements in the last campaign he might easily have aspired to the honour of a place in the emperor's household."

"Oh yes, he is ambitious," said Gregory, smiling. "One man's ambition is for high position, another's

an illustrious alliance: the former will owe everything to himself, the latter will make a stepping-stone of his wife, then they raise their eyes higher than they should."

"What do you mean to suggest?" said the general, beginning to see what Gregory was aiming at.

"I mean, your excellency," replied Gregory, "there are many men who, owing to the kindness shown them by others, forget their position and aspire to a more exalted one; having already been placed so high, their heads are turned."

"Gregory," cried the general, "believe me, you are getting into a scrape; for you are making an accusation, and if I take any notice of it, you will have to prove your words."

"By St. Basilius, general, it is no scrape when you have truth on your side; for I have said nothing I am not ready to prove."

"Then," said the general, "you persist in declaring that Fœdor loves my daughter?"

"Ah! I have not said that: it is your excellency. I have not named the lady Vaninka," said Gregory, with the duplicity of his nation.

"But you meant it, did you not? Come, contrary to your custom, reply frankly."

"It is true, your excellency; it is what I meant."

"And, according to you, my daughter reciprocates the passion, no doubt?"

"I fear so, your excellency."

"And what makes you think this, say?"

"First, Mr. Fœdor never misses a chance of speaking to the lady Vaninka."

"He is in the same house with her, would you have him avoid her?"

"When the lady Vaninka returns late, and when perchance Mr. Fœdor has not accompanied you, whatever the hour Mr. Fœdor is there, ready to help her out of the carriage."

"Fœdor attends me, it is his duty," said the general, beginning to believe that the serf's suspicions were founded on slight grounds. "He waits for me," he continued, "because when I return, at any hour of the day or night, I may have orders to give him."

"Not a day passes without Mr. Fœdor going into my lady Vaninka's room, although such a favour is not usually granted to a young man in a house like that of your excellency."

"Usually it is I who send him to her," said the general.

"Yes, in the daytime," replied Gregory, "but—at night?"

"At night!" cried the general, rising to his feet, and turning so pale that, after a moment, he was forced to lean for support on a table.

"Yes, at night, your excellency," answered Greg-

ory quietly; "and since, as you say, I have begun to mix myself up in a bad business, I must go on with it; besides, even if there were to result from it another punishment for me, even more terrible than that I have already endured, I should not allow so good a master to be deceived any longer."

"Be very careful about what you are going to say, slave; for I know the men of your nation. Take care, if the accusation you are making by way of revenge is not supported by visible, palpable, and positive proofs, you shall be punished as an infamous slanderer."

"To that I agree," said Gregory.

"Do you affirm that you have seen Fœdor enter my daughter's chamber at night?"

"I do not say that I have seen him enter it, your excellency. I say that I have seen him come out."

"When was that?"

"A quarter of an hour ago, when I was on my way to your excellency."

"You lie!" said the general, raising his fist.

"This is not our agreement, your excellency," said the slave, drawing back. "I am only to be punished if I fail to give proofs."

"But what are your proofs?"

"I have told you."

"And do you expect me to believe your word alone?"

"No; but I expect you to believe your own eyes."

"How?"

"The first time that Mr. Fœdor is in my lady Vaninka's room after midnight, I shall come to find your excellency, and then you can judge for yourself if I lie; but up to the present, your excellency, all the conditions of the service I wish to render you are to my disadvantage."

"In what way?"

"Well, if I fail to give proofs, I am to be treated as an infamous slanderer; but if I give them, what advantage shall I gain?"

"A thousand roubles and your freedom."

"That is a bargain, then, your excellency," replied Gregory quietly, replacing the razors on the general's toilet-table, "and I hope that before a week has passed you will be more just to me than you are now."

With these words the slave left the room, leaving the general convinced by his confidence that some dreadful misfortune threatened him.

From this time onward, as might be expected, the general weighed every word and noticed every gesture which passed between Vaninka and Fœdor in his presence; but he saw nothing to confirm his suspicions on the part of the aide-de-camp or of his daughter; on the contrary, Vaninka seemed colder and more reserved than ever.

A week passed in this way. About two o'clock in the morning of the ninth day, someone knocked at the general's door. It was Gregory.

"If your excellency will go into your daughter's room," said Gregory, "you will find Mr. Fœdor there."

The general turned pale, dressed himself without uttering a word, and followed the slave to the door of Vaninka's room. Having arrived there, with a motion of his hand he dismissed the informer, who, instead of retiring in obedience to this mute command, hid himself in the corner of the corridor.

When the general believed himself to be alone, he knocked once; but all was silent. This silence, however, proved nothing; for Vaninka might be asleep. He knocked a second time, and the young girl, in a perfectly calm voice, asked, "Who is there?"

"It is I," said the general, in a voice trembling with emotion.

"Annouschka!" said the girl to her foster-sister, who slept in the adjoining room, "open the door to my father. Forgive me, father," she continued; "but Annouschka is dressing, and will be with you in a moment."

The general waited patiently, for he could discover no trace of emotion in his daughter's voice, and he hoped that Gregory had been mistaken.

In a few moments the door opened, and the general went in, and cast a long look around him; there was no one in this first apartment.

Vaninka was in bed, paler perhaps than usual, but quite calm, with the loving smile on her lips with which she always welcomed her father.

"To what fortunate circumstance," asked the young girl in her softest tones, "do I owe the pleasure of seeing you at so late an hour?"

"I wished to speak to you about a very important matter," said the general, "and however late it was, I thought you would forgive me for disturbing you."

"My father will always be welcome in his daughter's room, at whatever hour of the day or night he presents himself there."

The general cast another searching look round, and was convinced that it was impossible for a man to be concealed in the first room—but the second still remained.

"I am listening," said Vaninka, after a moment of silence.

"Yes, but we are not alone," replied the general, "and it is important that no other ears should hear what I have to say to you."

"Annouschka, as you know, is my foster-sister," said Vaninka.

"That makes no difference," said the general, go-

ing candle in hand into the next room, which was somewhat smaller than his daughter's. "Annouschka," said he, "watch in the corridor and see that no one overhears us."

As he spoke these words, the general threw the same scrutinizing glance all round the room, but with the exception of the young girl there was no one there.

Annouschka obeyed, and the general followed her out, and, looking eagerly round for the last time, re-entered his daughter's room, and seated himself on the foot of her bed. Annouschka, at a sign from her mistress, left her alone with her father. The general held out his hand to Vaninka, and she took it without hesitation.

"My child," said the general, "I have to speak to you about a very important matter."

"What is it, father?" said Vaninka.

"You will soon be eighteen," continued the general, "and that is the age at which the daughters of the Russian nobility usually marry." The general paused for a moment to watch the effect of these words upon Vaninka, but her hand rested motionless in his. "For the last year your hand has been engaged by me," continued the general.

"May I know to whom?" asked Vaninka coldly.

"To the son of the Councillor-in-Ordinary," replied the general. "What is your opinion of him?"

"He is a worthy and noble young man, I am told, but I can have formed no opinion except from hearsay. Has he not been in garrison at Moscow for the last three months?"

"Yes," said the general, "but in three months' time he should return."

Vaninka remained silent.

"Have you nothing to say in reply?" asked the general.

"Nothing, father; but I have a favour to ask of you."

"What is it?"

"I do not wish to marry until I am twenty years old."

"Why not?"

"I have taken a vow to that effect."

"But if circumstances demanded the breaking of this vow, and made the celebration of this marriage imperatively necessary?"

"What circumstances?" asked Vaninka.

"Fœdor loves you," said the general, looking steadily at Vaninka.

"I know that," said Vaninka, with as little emotion as if the question did not concern her.

"You know that!" cried the general.

"Yes; he has told me so."

"When?"

"Yesterday."

"And you replied——?"

"That he must leave here at once."

"And he consented?"

"Yes, father."

"When does he go?"

"He has gone."

"How can that be?" said the general: "he only left me at ten o'clock."

"And he left me at midnight," said Vaninka.

"Ah!" said the general, drawing a deep breath of relief, "you are a noble girl, Vaninka, and I grant you what you ask—two years more. But remember it is the emperor who has decided upon this marriage."

"My father will do me the justice to believe that I am too submissive a daughter to be a rebellious subject."

"Excellent, Vaninka, excellent," said the general. "So, then, poor Fœdor has told you all?"

"Yes," said Vaninka.

"You knew that he addressed himself to me first?"

"I knew it."

"Then it was from him that you heard that your hand was engaged?"

"It was from him."

"And he consented to leave you? He is a good and noble young man, who shall always be under

my protection wherever he goes. Oh, if my word had not been given, I love him so much that, supposing you did not dislike him, I should have given him your hand."

"And you cannot recall your promise?" asked Vaninka.

"Impossible," said the general.

"Well, then, I submit to my father's will," said Vaninka.

"That is spoken like my daughter," said the general, embracing her. "Farewell, Vaninka; I do not ask if you love him. You have both done your duty, and I have nothing more to exact."

With these words, he rose and left the room. Annouschka was in the corridor; the general signed to her that she might go in again, and went on his way. At the door of his room he found Gregory waiting for him.

"Well, your excellency?" he asked.

"Well," said the general, "you are both right and wrong. Fœdor loves my daughter, but my daughter does not love him. He went into my daughter's room at eleven o'clock, but at midnight he left her for ever. No matter, come to me to-morrow, and you shall have your thousand roubles and your liberty."

Gregory went off, dumb with astonishment.

Meanwhile, Annouschka had re-entered her mis-

tress's room, as she had been ordered, and closed the door carefully behind her.

Vaninka immediately sprang out of bed and went to the door, listening to the retreating footsteps of the general. When they had ceased to be heard, she rushed into Annouschka's room, and both began to pull aside a bundle of linen, thrown down, as if by accident, into the embrasure of a window. Under the linen was a large chest with a spring lock. Annouschka pressed a button, Vaninka raised the lid. The two women uttered a loud cry: the chest was now a coffin; the young officer, stifled for want of air, lay dead within.

For a long time the two women hoped it was only a swoon. Annouschka sprinkled his face with water; Vaninka put salts to his nose. All was in vain. During the long conversation which the general had had with his daughter, and which had lasted more than half an hour, Fœdor, unable to get out of the chest, as the lid was closed by a spring, had died for want of air. The position of the two girls shut up with a corpse was frightful. Annouschka saw Siberia close at hand; Vaninka, to do her justice, thought of nothing but Fœdor. Both were in despair. However, as the despair of the maid was more selfish than that of her mistress, it was Annouschka who first thought of a plan of escaping from the situation in which they were placed.

"My lady," she cried suddenly, "we are saved."

Vaninka raised her head and looked at her attendant with her eyes bathed in tears.

"Saved?" said she, "saved? We are, perhaps, but Fœdor!"

"Listen now," said Annouschka: "your position is terrible, I grant that, and your grief is great; but your grief could be greater and your position more terrible still. If the general knew this——"

"What difference would it make to me?" said Vaninka. "I shall weep for him before the whole world."

"Yes, but you will be dishonoured before the whole world! To-morrow your slaves, and the day after all St. Petersburg, will know that a man died of suffocation while concealed in your chamber. Reflect, my lady: your honour is the honour of your father, the honour of your family."

"You are right," said Vaninka, shaking her head, as if to disperse the gloomy thoughts that burdened her brain,—"you are right, but what must we do?"

"Does my lady know my brother Ivan?"

"Yes."

"We must tell him all."

"Of what are you thinking?" cried Vaninka. "To confide in a man? A man, do I say? A serf! a slave!"

"The lower the position of the serf and slave, the safer will our secret be, since he will have everything to gain by keeping faith with us."

"Your brother is a drunkard," said Vaninka, with mingled fear and disgust.

"That is true," said Annouschka; "but where will you find a slave who is not? My brother gets drunk less than most, and is therefore more to be trusted than the others. Besides, in the position in which we are we must risk something."

"You are right," said Vaninka, recovering her usual resolution, which always grew in the presence of danger. "Go and seek your brother."

"We can do nothing this morning," said Annouschka, drawing back the window curtains. "Look, the dawn is breaking."

"But what can we do with the body of this unhappy man?" cried Vaninka.

"It must remain hidden where it is all day, and this evening, while you are at the Court entertainment, my brother shall remove it."

"True," murmured Vaninka in a strange tone, "I must go to Court this evening; to stay away would arouse suspicion. Oh, my God! my God!"

"Help me, my lady," said Annouschka; "I am not strong enough alone."

Vaninka turned deadly pale, but, spurred on by the danger, she went resolutely up to the body of her

lover; then, lifting it by the shoulders, while her maid raised it by the legs, she laid it once more in the chest. Then Annouschka shut down the lid, locked the chest, and put the key into her breast. Then both threw back the linen which had hidden it from the eyes of the general. Day dawned, as might be expected, ere sleep visited the eyes of Vaninka.

She went down, however, at the breakfast hour; for she did not wish to arouse the slightest suspicion in her father's mind. Only it might have been thought from her pallor that she had risen from the grave, but the general attributed this to the nocturnal disturbance of which he had been the cause.

Luck had served Vaninka wonderfully in prompting her to say that Fœdor had already gone; for not only did the general feel no surprise when he did not appear, but his very absence was a proof of his daughter's innocence. The general gave a pretext for his aide-de-camp's absence by saying that he had sent him on a mission. As for Vaninka, she remained out of her room till it was time to dress. A week before, she had been at the Court entertainment with Fœdor.

Vaninka might have excused herself from accompanying her father by feigning some slight indisposition, but two considerations made her fear to

act thus: the first was the fear of making the general anxious, and perhaps of making him remain at home himself, which would make the removal of the corpse more difficult; the second was the fear of meeting Ivan and having to blush before a slave. She preferred, therefore, to make a superhuman effort to control herself; and, going up again into her room, accompanied by her faithful Annouschka, she began to dress with as much care as if her heart were full of joy. When this cruel business was finished, she ordered Annouschka to shut the door; for she wished to see Fœdor once more, and to bid a last farewell to him who had been her lover. Annouschka obeyed; and Vaninka, with flowers in her hair and her breast covered with jewels, glided like a phantom into her servant's room.

Annouschka again opened the chest, and Vaninka, without shedding a tear, without breathing a sigh, with the profound and death-like calm of despair, leant down towards Fœdor and took off a plain ring which the young man had on his finger, placed it on her own, between two magnificent rings, then kissing him on the brow, she said, "Good-bye, my betrothed."

At this moment she heard steps approaching. It was a groom of the chambers coming from the general to ask if she were ready. Annouschka let the lid of the chest fall, and Vaninka going herself

to open the door, followed the messenger, who walked before her, lighting the way.

Such was her trust in her foster-sister that she left her to accomplish the dark and terrible task with which she had burdened herself.

A minute later, Annouschka saw the carriage containing the general and his daughter leave by the main gate of the hôtel.

She let half an hour go by, and then went down to look for Ivan. She found him drinking with Gregory, with whom the general had kept his word, and who had received the same day one thousand roubles and his liberty. Fortunately, the revellers were only beginning their rejoicings, and Ivan in consequence was sober enough for his sister to entrust her secret to him without hesitation.

Ivan followed Annouschka into the chamber of her mistress. There she reminded him of all that Vaninka, haughty but generous, had allowed his sister to do for him. The few glasses of brandy Ivan had already swallowed had predisposed him to gratitude (the drunkenness of the Russian is essentially tender). Ivan protested his devotion so warmly that Annouschka hesitated no longer, and, raising the lid of the chest, showed him the corpse of Fœdor. At this terrible sight Ivan remained an instant motionless, but he soon began to calculate how much money and how many benefits the

possession of such a secret would bring him. He swore by the most solemn oaths never to betray his mistress, and offered, as Annouschka had hoped, to dispose of the body of the unfortunate aide-de-camp.

The thing was easily done. Instead of returning to drink with Gregory and his comrades, Ivan went to prepare a sledge, filled it with straw, and hid at the bottom an iron crowbar. He brought this to the outside gate, and assuring himself he was not being spied upon, he raised the body of the dead man in his arms, hid it under the straw, and sat down above it. He had the gate of the hôtel opened, followed Niewski Street as far as the Zunamenie Church, passed through the shops in the Rejestwenskoi district, drove the sledge out on to the frozen Neva, and halted in the middle of the river, in front of the deserted church of Ste. Madeleine. There, protected by the solitude and darkness, hidden behind the black mass of his sledge, he began to break the ice, which was fifteen inches thick, with his pick. When he had made a large enough hole, he searched the body of Fœdor, took all the money he had about him, and slipped the body head foremost through the opening he had made. He then made his way back to the hôtel, while the imprisoned current of the Neva bore away the corpse towards the Gulf of Finland. An hour after, a

new crust of ice had formed, and not even a trace of the opening made by Ivan remained.

At midnight Vaninka returned with her father. A hidden fever had been consuming her all the evening: never had she looked so lovely, and she had been overwhelmed by the homage of the most distinguished nobles and courtiers. When she returned, she found Annouschka in the vestibule waiting to take her cloak. As she gave it to her, Vaninka sent her one of those questioning glances that seem to express so much. "It is done," said the girl in a low voice. Vaninka breathed a sigh of relief, as if a mountain had been removed from her breast. Great as was her self-control, she could no longer bear her father's presence, and excused herself from remaining to supper with him, on the plea of the fatigues of the evening. Vaninka was no sooner in her room, with the door once closed, than she tore the flowers from her hair, the necklace from her throat, cut with scissors the corsets which suffocated her, and then, throwing herself on her bed, she gave way to her grief. Annouschka thanked God for this outburst; her mistress's calmness had frightened her more than her despair. The first crisis over, Vaninka was able to pray. She spent an hour on her knees, then, yielding to the entreaties of her faithful attendant, went to bed. Annouschka sat down at the foot of the bed.

Neither slept, but when day came the tears which Vaninka had shed had calmed her.

Annouschka was instructed to reward her brother. Too large a sum given to a slave at once might have aroused suspicion, therefore Annouschka contented herself with telling Ivan that when he had need of money he had only to ask her for it.

Gregory, profiting by his liberty and wishing to make use of his thousand roubles, bought a little tavern on the outskirts of the town, where, thanks to his address and to the acquaintances he had among the servants in the great households of St. Petersburg, he began to develop an excellent business, so that in a short time the Red House (which was the name and colour of Gregory's establishment) had a great reputation. Another man took over his duties about the person of the general, and but for Fœdor's absence everything returned to its usual routine in the house of Count Tchermayloff.

Two months went by in this way, without anybody having the least suspicion of what had happened, when one morning before the usual breakfast-hour the general begged his daughter to come down to his room. Vaninka trembled with fear, for since that fatal night everything terrified her. She obeyed her father, and collecting all her strength, made her way to his chamber, The count was alone, but at the first glance Vaninka saw she

had nothing to fear from this interview: the general was waiting for her with that paternal smile which was the usual expression of his countenance when in his daughter's presence.

She approached, therefore, with her usual calmness, and, stooping down towards the general, gave him her forehead to kiss.

He motioned to her to sit down, and gave her an open letter. Vaninka looked at him for a moment in surprise, then turned her eyes to the letter.

It contained the news of the death of the man to whom her hand had been promised: he had been killed in a duel.

The general watched the effect of the letter on his daughter's face, and great as was Vaninka's self-control, so many different thoughts, such bitter regret, such poignant remorse assailed her when she learnt that she was now free again, that she could not entirely conceal her emotion. The general noticed it, and attributed it to the love which he had for a long time suspected his daughter felt for the young aide-de-camp.

"Well," he said, smiling, "I see it is all for the best."

"How is that, father?" asked Vaninka.

"Doubtless," said the general. "Did not Fœdor leave because he loved you?"

"Yes," murmured the young girl.

"Well, now he may return," said the general.

Vaninka remained silent, her eyes fixed, her lips trembling.

"Return!" she said, after a moment's silence.

"Yes, certainly return. We shall be most unfortunate," continued the general, smiling, "if we cannot find someone in the house who knows where he is. Come, Vaninka, tell me the place of his exile, and I will undertake the rest."

"Nobody knows where Fœdor is," murmured Vaninka in a hollow voice; "nobody but God, nobody!"

"What!" said the general, "he has sent you no news since the day he left?"

Vaninka shook her head in denial. She was so heart-broken that she could not speak.

The general in his turn became gloomy. "Do you fear some misfortune, then?" said he.

"I fear that I shall never be happy again on earth," cried Vaninka, giving way under the pressure of her grief; then she continued at once, "Let me retire, father; I am ashamed of what I have said."

The general, who saw nothing in this exclamation beyond regret for having allowed the confession of her love to escape her, kissed his daughter on the brow and allowed her to retire. He hoped that, in spite of the mournful way in which Van-

Vaninka turned deadly pale, but, spurred on by the danger, she went resolutely up to the body of her lover.

—p. 2650

From the original illustration by L. Boulanger

inka had spoken of Fœdor, that it would be possible to find him. The same day he went to the emperor and told him of the love of Fœdor for his daughter, and requested, since death had freed her from her first engagement, that he might dispose of her hand. The emperor consented, and the general then solicited a further favour. Paul was in one of his kindly moods, and showed himself disposed to grant it. The general told him that Fœdor had disappeared for two months; that everyone, even his daughter, was ignorant of his whereabouts, and begged him to have inquiries made. The emperor immediately sent for the chief of police, and gave him the necessary orders.

Six weeks went by without any result. Vaninka, since the day when the letter came, was sadder and more melancholy than ever. Vainly from time to time the general tried to make her more hopeful. Vaninka only shook her head and withdrew. The general ceased to speak of Fœdor.

But it was not the same among the household. The young aide-de-camp had been popular with the servants, and, with the exception of Gregory, there was not a soul who wished him harm, so that, when it became known that he had not been sent on a mission, but had disappeared, the matter became the constant subject of conversation in the ante-chamber, the kitchen, and the stables. There was

another place where people busied themselves about it a great deal—this was the Red House.

From the day when he heard of Fœdor's mysterious departure Gregory had his suspicions. He was sure that he had seen Fœdor enter Vaninka's room, and unless he had gone out while he was going to seek the general, he did not understand why the latter had not found him in his daughter's room. Another thing occupied his mind, which it seemed to him might perhaps have some connection with this event—the amount of money Ivan had been spending since that time, a very extraordinary amount for a slave. This slave, however, was the brother of Vaninka's cherished foster-sister, so that, without being sure, Gregory already suspected the source from whence this money came. Another thing confirmed him in his suspicions, which was that Ivan, who had not only remained his most faithful friend, but had become one of his best customers, never spoke of Fœdor, held his tongue if he were mentioned in his presence, and to all questions, however pressing they were, made but one answer: "Let us speak of something else."

In the meantime the Feast of Kings arrived. This is a great day in St. Petersburg, for it is also the day for blessing the waters.

As Vaninka had been present at the ceremony, and was fatigued after standing for two hours on

the Neva, the general did not go out that evening, and gave Ivan leave to do so. Ivan profited by the permission to go to the Red House.

There was a numerous company there, and Ivan was welcomed; for it was known that he generally came with full pockets. This time he did not belie his reputation, and had scarcely arrived before he made the sorok-kopecks ring, to the great envy of his companions.

At this warning sound Gregory hastened up with all possible deference, a bottle of brandy in each hand; for he knew that when Ivan summoned him he gained in two ways, as innkeeper and as boon companion. Ivan did not disappoint these hopes, and Gregory was invited to share in the entertainment. The conversation turned on slavery, and some of the unhappy men, who had only four days in the year of respite from their eternal labour, talked loudly of the happiness Gregory had enjoyed since he had obtained his freedom.

"Bah!" said Ivan, on whom the brandy had begun to take effect, "there are some slaves who are freer than their masters."

"What do you mean?" said Gregory, pouring him out another glass of brandy.

"I meant to say happier," said Ivan quickly.

"It is difficult to prove that," said Gregory doubtingly.

"Why difficult? Our masters, the moment they are born, are put into the hands of two or three pedants, one French, another German, and a third English, and whether they like them or not, they must be content with their society till they are seventeen, and whether they wish to or not, must learn three barbarous languages, at the expense of our noble Russian tongue, which they have sometimes completely forgotten by the time the others are acquired. Again, if one of them wishes for some career, he must become a soldier: if he is a sub-lieutenant, he is the slave of the lieutenant; if he is a lieutenant, he is the slave of the captain, and the captain of the major, and so on up to the emperor, who is nobody's slave, but who one fine day is surprised at the table, while walking, or in his bed, and is poisoned, stabbed, or strangled. If he chooses a civil career, it is much the same. He marries a wife, and does not love her; children come to him he knows not how, whom he has to provide for; he must struggle incessantly to provide for his family if he is poor, and if he is rich to prevent himself being robbed by his steward and cheated by his tenants. Is this life? While we, gentlemen, we are born, and that is the only pain we cost our mothers—all the rest is the master's concern. He provides for us, he chooses our calling, always easy enough to learn if we are not quite

idiots. Are we ill? His doctor attends us gratis; it is a loss to him if we die. Are we well? We have our four certain meals a day, and a good stove to sleep near at night. Do we fall in love? There is never any hindrance to our marriage, if the woman loves us; the master himself asks us to hasten our marriage, for he wishes us to have as many children as possible. And when the children are born, he does for them in their turn all he has done for us. Can you find me many great lords as happy as their slaves?"

"All this is true," said Gregory, pouring him out another glass of brandy; "but, after all, you are not free."

"Free to do what?" asked Ivan.

"Free to go where you will and when you will."

"I am as free as the air," replied Ivan.

"Nonsense!" said Gregory.

"Free as air, I tell you; for I have good masters, and above all a good mistress," continued Ivan, with a significant smile, "and I have only to ask and it is done."

"What! if after having got drunk here to-day, you asked to come back to-morrow to get drunk again?" said Gregory, who in his challenge to Ivan did not forget his own interests,—"if you asked that?"

"I should come back again," said Ivan.

"To-morrow?" said Gregory.

"To-morrow, the day after, every day if I liked."

"The fact is, Ivan is our young lady's favourite," said another of the count's slaves who was present, profiting by his comrade Ivan's liberality.

"It is all the same," said Gregory; "for supposing such permission were given you, money would soon run short."

"Never!" said Ivan, swallowing another glass of brandy, "never will Ivan want for money as long as there is a kopeck in my lady's purse."

"I did not find her so liberal," said Gregory bitterly.

"Oh, you forget, my friend; you know well she does not reckon with her friends: remember the strokes of the knout."

"I have no wish to speak about that," said Gregory. "I know that she is generous with blows, but her money is another thing. I have never seen the colour of that."

"Well, would you like to see the colour of mine?" said Ivan, getting more and more drunk. "See here, here are kopecks, sorok-kopecks, blue notes worth five roubles, red notes worth twenty-five roubles, and to-morrow, if you like, I will show you white notes worth fifty roubles. A health to

my lady Vaninka!" And Ivan held out his glass again, and Gregory filled it to the brim.

"But does money," said Gregory, pressing Ivan more and more,—"does money make up for scorn?"

"Scorn!" said Ivan,—"scorn! Who scorns me? Do you, because you are free? Fine freedom! I would rather be a well-fed slave than a free man dying of hunger."

"I mean the scorn of our masters," replied Gregory.

"The scorn of our masters! Ask Alexis, ask Daniel there, if my lady scorns me."

"The fact is," said the two slaves in reply, who both belonged to the general's household, "Ivan must certainly have a charm; for everyone talks to him as if to a master."

"Because he is Annouschka's brother," said Gregory, "and Annouschka is my lady's foster-sister."

"That may be so," said the two slaves.

"For that reason or for some other," said Ivan; "but, in short, that is the case."

"Yes; but if your sister should die?" said Gregory. "Ah!"

"If my sister should die, that would be a pity, for she is a good girl. I drink to her health! But if she should die, that would make no difference. I am respected for myself; they respect me because they fear me."

"Fear my lord Ivan!" said Gregory, with a loud laugh. "It follows, then, that if my lord Ivan were tired of receiving orders, and gave them in his turn, my lord Ivan would be obeyed."

"Perhaps," said Ivan.

"He said 'perhaps,' repeated Gregory, laughing louder than ever,—"he said 'perhaps.' Did you hear him?"

"Yes," said the slaves, who had drunk so much that they could only answer in monosyllables.

"Well, I no longer say 'perhaps,' I now say 'for certain.'"

"Oh, I should like to see that," said Gregory; "I would give something to see that."

"Well, send away these fellows, who are getting drunk like pigs, and for nothing, you will find."

"For nothing?" said Gregory. "You are jesting. Do you think I should give them drink for nothing?"

"Well, we shall see. How much would be their score, for your atrocious brandy, if they drank from now till midnight, when you are obliged to shut up your tavern?"

"Not less than twenty roubles."

"Here are thirty; turn them out, and let us remain by ourselves."

"Friends," said Gregory, taking out his watch as if to look at the time, "it is just upon midnight;

you know the governor's orders, so you must go." The men, habituated like all Russians to passive obedience, went without a murmur, and Gregory found himself alone with Ivan and the two other slaves of the general.

"Well, here we are alone," said Gregory. "What do you mean to do?"

"Well, what would you say," replied Ivan, "if in spite of the late hour and the cold, and in spite of the fact that we are only slaves, my lady were to leave her father's house and come to drink our healths?"

"I would say that you ought to take advantage of it," said Gregory, shrugging his shoulders, "and tell her to bring at the same time a bottle of brandy. There is probably better brandy in the general's cellar than in mine."

"There is better," said Ivan, as if he was perfectly sure of it, "and my lady shall bring you a bottle of it."

"You are mad!" said Gregory.

"He is mad!" repeated the other two slaves mechanically.

"Oh, I am mad?" said Ivan. "Well, will you take a wager?"

"What will you wager?"

"Two hundred roubles against a year of free drinking in your inn."

"Done!" said Gregory.

"Are your comrades included?" said the two moujiks.

"They are included," said Ivan, "and in consideration of them we will reduce the time to six months. Is that agreed?"

"It is agreed," said Gregory.

The two who were making the wager shook hands, and the agreement was perfected. Then, with an air of confidence, assumed to confound the witnesses of this strange scene, Ivan wrapped himself in the fur coat which, like a cautious man, he had spread on the stove, and went out.

At the end of half an hour he reappeared.

"Well!" cried Gregory and the two slaves together.

"She is following," said Ivan.

The three tipplers looked at one another in amazement, but Ivan quietly returned to his place in the middle of them, poured out a new bumper, and raising his glass, cried—

"To my lady's health! It is the least we can do when she is kind enough to come and join us on so cold a night, when the snow is falling fast."

"Annouschka," said a voice outside, "knock at this door and ask Gregory if he has not some of our servants with him."

Gregory and the two other slaves looked at one

another, stupefied: they had recognised Vaninka's voice. As for Ivan, he flung himself back in his chair, balancing himself with marvellous impertinence.

Annouschka opened the door, and they could see, as Ivan had said, that the snow was falling heavily.

"Yes, madam," said the girl; "my brother is there, with Daniel and Alexis."

Vaninka entered.

"My friends," said she, with a strange smile, "I am told that you were drinking my health, and I have come to bring you something to drink it again. Here is a bottle of old French brandy which I have chosen for you from my father's cellar. Hold out your glasses."

Gregory and the slaves obeyed with the slowness and hesitation of astonishment, while Ivan held out his glass with the utmost effrontery.

Vaninka filled them to the brim herself, and then, as they hesitated to drink, "Come, drink to my health, friends," said she.

"Hurrah!" cried the drinkers, reassured by the kind and familiar tone of their noble visitor, as they emptied their glasses at a draught.

Vaninka at once poured them out another glass; then putting the bottle on the table, "Empty the bottle, my friends," said she, "and do not trouble about me. Annouschka and I, with the permission

of the master of the house, will sit near the stove till the storm is over."

Gregory tried to rise and place stools near the stove, but whether he was quite drunk or whether some narcotic had been mixed with the brandy, he fell back on his seat, trying to stammer out an excuse.

"It is all right," said Vaninka: "do not disturb yourselves; drink, my friends, drink."

The revellers profited by this permission, and each emptied the glass before him. Scarcely had Gregory emptied his before he fell forward on the table.

"Good!" said Vaninka to her maid in a low voice: "the opium is taking effect."

"What do you mean to do?" said Annouschka.

"You will soon see," was the answer.

The two moujiks followed the example of the master of the house, and fell down side by side on the ground. Ivan was left struggling against sleep, and trying to sing a drinking song; but soon his tongue refused to obey him, his eyes closed in spite of him, and seeking the tune that escaped him, and muttering words he was unable to pronounce, he fell fast asleep near his companions.

Immediately Vaninka rose, fixed them with flashing eyes, and called them by name one after another. There was no response.

Then she clapped her hands and cried joyfully, "The moment has come!" Going to the back of the room, she brought thence an armful of straw, placed it in a corner of the room, and did the same in the other corners. She then took a flaming brand from the stove and set fire in succession to the four corners of the room.

"What are you doing?" said Annouschka, wild with terror, trying to stop her.

"I am going to bury our secret in the ashes of this house," answered Vaninka.

"But my brother, my poor brother!" said the girl.

"Your brother is a wretch who has betrayed me, and we are lost if we do not destroy him."

"Oh, my brother, my poor brother!"

"You can die with him if you like," said Vaninka, accompanying the proposal with a smile which showed she would not have been sorry if Annouschka had carried sisterly affection to that length.

"But look at the fire, madam—the fire!"

"Let us go, then," said Vaninka; and, dragging out the heart-broken girl, she locked the door behind her and threw the key far away into the snow.

"In the name of Heaven," said Annouschka, "let us go home quickly: I cannot gaze upon this awful sight!"

"No, let us stay here!" said Vaninka, holding her back with a grasp of almost masculine strength. "Let us stay until the house falls in on them, so that we may be certain that not one of them escapes."

"Oh, my God!" cried Annouschka, falling on her knees, "have mercy upon my poor brother, for death will hurry him unprepared into Thy presence."

"Yes, yes, pray; that is right," said Vaninka. "I wish to destroy their bodies, not their souls."

Vaninka stood motionless, her arms crossed, brilliantly lit up by the flames, while her attendant prayed. The fire did not last long: the house was wooden, with the crevices filled with oakum, like all those of Russian peasants, so that the flames, creeping out at the four corners, soon made great headway, and, fanned by the wind, spread rapidly to all parts of the building. Vaninka followed the progress of the fire with blazing eyes, fearing to see some half-burnt spectral shape rush out of the flames. At last the roof fell in, and Vaninka, relieved of all fear, then at last made her way to the general's house, into which the two women entered without being seen, thanks to the permission Annouschka had to go out at any hour of the day or night.

The next morning the sole topic of conversation in St. Petersburg was the fire at the Red House. Four half-consumed corpses were dug out from beneath the ruins, and as three of the general's slaves were missing, he had no doubt that the unrecognisable bodies were those of Ivan, Daniel, and Alexis: as for the fourth, it was certainly that of Gregory.

The cause of the fire remained a secret from everyone: the house was solitary, and the snow-storm so violent that nobody had met the two women on the deserted road. Vaninka was sure of her maid. Her secret then had perished with Ivan. But now remorse took the place of fear: the young girl who was so pitiless and inflexible in the execution of the deed quailed at its remembrance. It seemed to her that by revealing the secret of her crime to a priest, she would be relieved of her terrible burden. She therefore sought a confessor renowned for his lofty charity, and, under the seal of confession, told him all. The priest was horrified by the story. Divine mercy is boundless, but human forgiveness has its limits. He refused Vaninka the absolution she asked. This refusal was terrible: it would banish Vaninka from the Holy Table; this banishment would be noticed, and could not fail to be attributed to some unheard-of and secret crime. Vaninka fell at the feet of the priest,

and in the name of her father, who would be disgraced by her shame, begged him to mitigate the rigour of this sentence.

The confessor reflected deeply, then thought he had found a way to obviate such consequences. It was that Vaninka should approach the Holy Table with the other young girls; the priest would stop before her as before all the others, but only say to her, "Pray and weep"; the congregation, deceived by this, would think that she had received the Sacrament like her companions. This was all that Vaninka could obtain.

This confession took place about seven o'clock in the evening, and the solitude of the church, added to the darkness of night, had given it a still more awful character. The confessor returned home, pale and trembling. His wife Elizabeth was waiting for him alone. She had just put her little daughter Arina, who was eight years old, to bed in an adjoining room. When she saw her husband, she uttered a cry of terror, so changed and haggard was his appearance. The confessor tried to reassure her, but his trembling voice only increased her alarm. She asked the cause of his agitation; the confessor refused to tell her. Elizabeth had heard the evening before that her mother was ill; she thought that her husband had received some bad news. The day was Monday, which is considered

an unlucky day among the Russians, and, going out that day, Elizabeth had met a man in mourning; these omens were too numerous and too strong not to portend misfortune.

Elizabeth burst into tears, and cried out, "My mother is dead!"

The priest in vain tried to reassure her by telling her that his agitation was not due to that. The poor woman, dominated by one idea, made no response to his protestations but this everlasting cry, "My mother is dead!"

Then, to bring her to reason, the confessor told her that his emotion was due to the avowal of a crime which he had just heard in the confessional. But Elizabeth shook her head: it was a trick, she said, to hide from her the sorrow which had fallen upon her. Her agony, instead of calming, became more violent; her tears ceased to flow, and were followed by hysterics. The priest then made her swear to keep the secret, and the sanctity of the confession was betrayed.

Little Arina had awakened at Elizabeth's cries, and being disturbed and at the same time curious as to what her parents were doing, she got up, went to listen at the door, and heard all.

The day for the Communion came; the church of St. Siméon was crowded. Vaninka came to kneel at the railing of the choir. Behind her was

her father and his aides-de-camp, and behind them their servants.

Arina was also in the church with her mother. The inquisitive child wished to see Vaninka, whose name she had heard pronounced that terrible night, when her father had failed in the first and most sacred of the duties imposed on a priest. While her mother was praying, she left her chair and glided among the worshippers, nearly as far as the railing.

But when she had arrived there, she was stopped by the group of the general's servants. But Arina had not come so far to be stopped so easily: she tried to push between them, but they opposed her; she persisted, and one of them pushed her roughly back. The child fell, struck her head against a seat, and got up bleeding and crying, "You are very proud for a slave. Is it because you belong to the great lady who burnt the Red House?"

These words, uttered in a loud voice, in the midst of the silence which preceded the sacred ceremony, were heard by everyone. They were answered by a shriek. Vaninka had fainted. The next day the general, at the feet of Paul, recounted to him, as his sovereign and judge, the whole terrible story, which Vaninka, crushed by her long struggle, had at last revealed to him, at night, after the scene in the church.

The emperor remained for a moment in thought at the end of this strange confession; then, getting up from the chair where he had been sitting while the miserable father told his story, he went to a bureau, and wrote on a sheet of paper the following sentence:—

"The priest having violated what should have been inviolable, the secrets of the confessional, is exiled to Siberia and deprived of his priestly office. His wife will follow him: she is to be blamed for not having respected his character as a minister of the altar. The little girl will not leave her parents.

"Annouschka, the attendant, will also go to Siberia for not having made known to her master his daughter's conduct.

"I preserve all my esteem for the general, and I mourn with him for the deadly blow which has struck him.

"As for Vaninka, I know of no punishment which can be inflicted upon her. I only see in her the daughter of a brave soldier, whose whole life has been devoted to the service of his country. Besides, the extraordinary way in which the crime was discovered, seems to place the culprit beyond the limits of my severity. I leave her punishment in her own hands. If I understand her character, if any feeling of dignity remains to her, her heart and

her remorse will show her the path she ought to follow."

Paul handed the paper open to the general, ordering him to take it to Count Pahlen, the governor of St. Petersburg.

On the following day the emperor's orders were carried out.

Vaninka went into a convent, where towards the end of the same year she died of shame and grief.

The general found the death he sought on the field of Austerlitz.

THE MARQUISE DE GANGES

THE MARQUISE DE GANGES

TOWARD the close of the year 1657, a very plain carriage, with no arms painted on it, stopped, about eight o'clock one evening, before the door of a house in the rue Hautefeuille, at which two other coaches were already standing. A lackey at once got down to open the carriage door; but a sweet, though rather tremulous voice stopped him, saying, "Wait, while I see whether this is the place."

Then a head, muffled so closely in a black satin mantle that no feature could be distinguished, was thrust from one of the carriage windows, and looking around, seemed to seek for some decisive sign on the house front. The unknown lady appeared to be satisfied by her inspection, for she turned back to her companion.

"It is here," said she. "There is the sign."

As a result of this certainty, the carriage door was opened, the two women alighted, and after having once more raised their eyes to a strip of wood, some six or eight feet long by two broad, which was nailed above the windows of the second storey, and bore the inscription, "*Madame Voison,*

midwife," stole quickly into a passage, the door of which was unfastened, and in which there was just so much light as enabled persons passing in or out to find their way along the narrow winding stair that led from the ground floor to the fifth storey.

The two strangers, one of whom appeared to be of far higher rank than the other, did not stop, as might have been expected, at the door corresponding with the inscription that had guided them, but, on the contrary, went on to the next floor.

Here, upon the landing, was a kind of dwarf, oddly dressed after the fashion of sixteenth-century Venetian buffoons, who, when he saw the two women coming, stretched out a wand, as though to prevent them from going farther, and asked what they wanted.

"To consult the spirit," replied the woman of the sweet and tremulous voice.

"Come in and wait," returned the dwarf, lifting a panel of tapestry and ushering the two women into a waiting-room.

The women obeyed, and remained for about half an hour, seeing and hearing nothing. At last a door, concealed by the tapestry, was suddenly opened; a voice uttered the word "Enter," and the two women were introduced into a second room, hung with black, and lighted solely by a three-branched lamp that hung from the ceiling. The

door closed behind them, and the clients found themselves face to face with the sibyl.

She was a woman of about twenty-five or twenty-six, who, unlike other women, evidently desired to appear older than she was. She was dressed in black; her hair hung in plaits; her neck, arms, and feet were bare; the belt at her waist was clasped by a large garnet which threw out sombre fires. In her hand she held a wand, and she was raised on a sort of platform which stood for the tripod of the ancients, and from which came acrid and penetrating fumes; she was, moreover, fairly handsome, although her features were common, the eyes only excepted, and these, by some trick of the toilet, no doubt, looked inordinately large, and, like the garnet in her belt, emitted strange lights.

When the two visitors came in, they found the soothsayer leaning her forehead on her hand, as though absorbed in thought. Fearing to rouse her from her ecstasy, they waited in silence until it should please her to change her position. At the end of ten minutes she raised her head, and seemed only now to become aware that two persons were standing before her.

"What is wanted of me again?" she asked, "and shall I have rest only in the grave?"

"Forgive me, madame," said the sweet-voiced unknown, "but I am wishing to know——"

"Silence!" said the sibyl, in a solemn voice. "I will not know your affairs. It is to the spirit that you must address yourself; he is a jealous spirit, who forbids his secrets to be shared; I can but pray to him for you, and obey his will."

At these words, she left her tripod, passed into an adjoining room, and soon returned, looking even paler and more anxious than before, and carrying in one hand a burning chafing dish, in the other a red paper. The three flames of the lamp grew fainter at the same moment, and the room was left lighted up only by the chafing dish; every object now assumed a fantastic air that did not fail to disquiet the two visitors, but it was too late to draw back.

The soothsayer placed the chafing dish in the middle of the room, presented the paper to the young woman who had spoken, and said to her—

"Write down what you wish to know."

The woman took the paper with a steadier hand than might have been expected, seated herself at a table, and wrote:—

"Am I young? Am I beautiful? Am I maid, wife, or widow? This is for the past.

"Shall I marry, or marry again? Shall I live long, or shall I die young? This is for the future."

Then, stretching out her hand to the soothsayer, she asked—

"What am I to do now with this?"

"Roll that letter around this ball," answered the other, handing to the unknown a little ball of virgin wax. "Both ball and letter will be consumed in the flame before your eyes; the spirit knows your secrets already. In three days you will have the answer."

The unknown did as the sibyl bade her; then the latter took from her hands the ball and the paper in which it was wrapped, and went and threw both into the chafing pan.

"And now all is done as it should be," said the soothsayer. "Comus!"

The dwarf came in.

"See the lady to her coach."

The stranger left a purse upon the table, and followed Comus. He conducted her and her companion, who was only a confidential maid, down a back staircase, used as an exit, and leading into a different street from that by which the two women had come in; but the coachman, who had been told beforehand of this circumstance, was awaiting them at the door, and they had only to step into their carriage, which bore them rapidly away in the direction of the rue Dauphine.

Three days later, according to the promise given her, the fair unknown, when she awakened, found on the table beside her a letter in an unfa-

miliar handwriting; it was addressed "To the beautiful Provençale," and contained these words:—

"You are young; you are beautiful; you are a widow. This is for the present.

"You will marry again; you will die young, and by a violent death. This is for the future.

"THE SPIRIT."

The answer was written upon a paper like that upon which the questions had been set down.

The marquise turned pale and uttered a faint cry of terror; the answer was so perfectly correct in regard to the past as to call up a fear that it might be equally accurate in regard to the future.

The truth is that the unknown lady wrapped in a mantle whom we have escorted into the modern sibyl's cavern was no other than the beautiful Marie de Rossan, who before her marriage had borne the name of Mademoiselle de Châteaublanc, from that of an estate belonging to her maternal grandfather, M. Joannis de Nochères, who owned a fortune of five to six hundred thousand livres. At the age of thirteen—that is to say, in 1649—she had married the Marquis de Castellane, a gentleman of very high birth, who claimed to be descended from John of Castille, the son of Pedro the Cruel, and from Juana

de Castro, his mistress. Proud of his young wife's beauty, the Marquis de Castellane, who was an officer of the king's galleys, had hastened to present her at court. Louis XIV, who at the time of her presentation was barely twenty years old, was struck by her enchanting face, and to the great despair of the famous beauties of the day danced with her three times in one evening. Finally, as a crowning touch to her reputation, the famous Christina of Sweden, who was then at the French court, said of her that she had never, in any of the kingdoms through which she had passed, seen anything equal to "the beautiful Provençale." This praise had been so well received, that the name of "the beautiful Provençale" had clung to Madame de Castellane, and she was everywhere known by it.

This favour of Louis XIV and this summing up of Christina's had been enough to bring the Marquise de Castellane instantly into fashion; and Mignard, who had just received a patent of nobility and been made painter to the king, put the seal to her celebrity by asking leave to paint her portrait. That portrait still exists, and gives a perfect notion of the beauty which it represents; but as the portrait is far from our readers' eyes, we will content ourselves by repeating, in its own original words, the one given in 1667 by the author of a pamphlet published at Rouen under the following title: *True and Princi-*

pal Circumstances of the Deplorable Death of Madame the Marquise de Ganges:[1]—

"Her complexion, which was of a dazzling whiteness, was illumined by not too brilliant a red, and art itself could not have arranged more skilfully the gradations by which this red joined and merged into the whiteness of the complexion. The brilliance of her face was heightened by the decided blackness of her hair, growing, as though drawn by a painter of the finest taste, around a well proportioned brow; her large, well opened eyes were of the same hue as her hair, and shone with a soft and piercing flame that rendered it impossible to gaze upon her steadily; the smallness, the shape, the turn of her mouth, and the beauty of her teeth were incomparable; the position and the regular proportion of her nose added to her beauty such an air of dignity, as inspired a respect for her equal to the love that might be inspired by her beauty; the rounded contour of her face, produced by a becoming plumpness, exhibited all the vigour and freshness of health; to complete her charms, her glances, the movements of her lips and of her head, appeared to be guided by the

[1] It is from this pamphlet, and from the *Account of the Death of Madame the Marquise de Ganges, formerly Marquise de Castellane,* that we have borrowed the principal circumstances of this tragic story. To these documents we must add—that we may not be constantly referring our readers to original sources—the *Celebrated Trials* by Guyot de Pitaval, the *Life of Marie de Rossan,* and the *Lettres galantes* of Madame Desnoyers.

graces; her shape corresponded to the beauty of her face; lastly, her arms, her hands, her bearing, and her gait were such that nothing further could be wished to complete the agreeable presentment of a beautiful woman." [1]

It is easy to understand that a woman thus endowed could not, in a court where gallantry was more pursued than in any other spot in the world, escape the calumnies of rivals; such calumnies, however, never produced any result, so correctly, even

[1] All her contemporaries, indeed, are in agreement as to her marvellous beauty; here is a second portrait of the marquise, delineated in a style and manner still more characteristic of that period:—

"You will remember that she had a complexion smoother and finer than a mirror, that her whiteness was so well commingled with the lively blood as to produce an exact admixture never beheld elsewhere, and imparting to her countenance the tenderest animation; her eyes and hair were blacker than jet; her eyes, I say, of which the gaze could scarce, from their excess of lustre, be supported, which have been celebrated as a miracle of tenderness and sprightliness, which have given rise, a thousand times, to the finest compliments of the day, and have been the torment of many a rash man, must excuse me, if I do not pause longer to praise them, in a letter; her mouth was the feature of her face which compelled the most critical to avow that they had seen none of equal perfection, and that, by its shape, its smallness, and its brilliance, it might furnish a pattern for all those others whose sweetness and charms had been so highly vaunted; her nose conformed to the fair proportion of all her features; it was, that is to say, the finest in the world; the whole shape of her face was perfectly round, and of so charming a fullness that such an assemblage of beauties was never before seen together. The expression of this head was one of unparalleled sweetness and of a majesty which she softened rather by disposition than by study; her figure was opulent, her speech agreeable, her step noble, her demeanour easy, her temper sociable, her wit devoid of malice, and founded upon great goodness of heart."

in the absence of her husband, did the marquise contrive to conduct herself; her cold and serious conversation, rather concise than lively, rather solid than brilliant, contrasted, indeed, with the light turn, the capricious and fanciful expressions employed by the wits of that time; the consequence was that those who had failed to succeed with her, tried to spread a report that the marquise was merely a beautiful idol, virtuous with the virtue of a statue. But though such things might be said and repeated in the absence of the marquise, from the moment that she appeared in a drawing-room, from the moment that her beautiful eyes and sweet smile added their indefinable expression to those brief, hurried, and sensible words that fell from her lips, the most prejudiced came back to her and were forced to own that God had never before created anything that so nearly touched perfection.

She was thus in the enjoyment of a triumph that backbiters failed to shake, and that scandal vainly sought to tarnish, when news came of the wreck of the French galleys in Sicilian waters, and of the death of the Marquis de Castellane, who was in command. The marquise on this occasion, as usual, displayed the greatest piety and propriety: although she had no very violent passion for her husband, with whom she had spent scarcely one of the seven years during which their marriage had lasted, on

receipt of the news she went at once into retreat, going to live with Madame d'Ampus, her mother-in-law, and ceasing not only to receive visitors but also to go out.

Six months after the death of her husband, the marquise received letters from her grandfather, M. Joannis de Nochères, begging her to come and finish her time of mourning at Avignon. Having been fatherless almost from childhood, Mademoiselle de Châteaublanc had been brought up by this good old man, whom she loved dearly; she hastened accordingly to accede to his invitation, and prepared everything for her departure.

This was at the moment when la Voisin, still a young woman, and far from having the reputation which she subsequently acquired, was yet beginning to be talked of. Several friends of the Marquise de Castellane had been to consult her, and had received strange predictions from her, some of which, either through the art of her who framed them, or through some odd concurrence of circumstances, had come true. The marquise could not resist the curiosity with which various tales that she had heard of this woman's powers had inspired her, and some days before setting out for Avignon she made the visit which we have narrated. What answer she received to her questions we have seen.

The marquise was not superstitious, yet this fatal

prophecy impressed itself upon her mind and left behind a deep trace, which neither the pleasure of revisiting her native place, nor the affection of her grandfather, nor the fresh admiration which she did not fail to receive, could succeed in removing; indeed, this fresh admiration was a weariness to the marquise, and before long she begged leave of her grandfather to retire into a convent and to spend there the last three months of her mourning.

It was in that place, and it was with the warmth of these poor cloistered maidens, that she heard a man spoken of for the first time, whose reputation for beauty, as a man, was equal to her own, as a woman. This favourite of nature was the sieur de Lenide, Marquis de Ganges, Baron of Languedoc, and governor of Saint-André, in the diocese of Uzès. The marquise heard of him so often, and it was so frequently declared to her that nature seemed to have formed them for each other, that she began to allow admission to a very strong desire of seeing him. Doubtless, the sieur de Lenide, stimulated by similar suggestions, had conceived a great wish to meet the marquise; for, having got M. de Nochères —who no doubt regretted her prolonged retreat— to entrust him with a commission for his granddaughter, he came to the convent parlour and asked for the fair recluse. She, although she had never seen him, recognised him at the first glance; for

having never seen so handsome a cavalier as he who now presented himself before her, she thought this could be no other than the Marquis de Ganges, of whom people had so often spoken to her.

That which was to happen, happened: the Marquise de Castellane and the Marquis de Ganges could not look upon each other without loving. Both were young, the marquis was noble and in a good position, the marquise was rich; everything in the match, therefore, seemed suitable: and indeed it was deferred only for the space of time necessary to complete the year of mourning, and the marriage was celebrated towards the beginning of the year 1558. The marquis was twenty years of age, and the marquise twenty-two.

The beginnings of this union were perfectly happy; the marquis was in love for the first time, and the marquise did not remember ever to have been in love. A son and a daughter came to complete their happiness. The marquise had entirely forgotten the fatal prediction, or, if she occasionally thought of it now, it was to wonder that she could ever have believed in it. Such happiness is not of this world, and when by chance it lingers here a while, it seems sent rather by the anger than by the goodness of God. Better, indeed, would it be for him who possesses and who loses it, never to have known it.

The Marquis de Ganges was the first to weary of this happy life. Little by little he began to miss the pleasures of a young man; he began to draw away from the marquise and to draw nearer to his former friends. On her part, the marquise, who for the sake of wedded intimacy had sacrificed her habits of social life, threw herself into society, where new triumphs awaited her. These triumphs aroused the jealousy of the marquis; but he was too much a man of his century to invite ridicule by any manifestation; he shut his jealousy into his soul, and it emerged in a different form on every different occasion. To words of love, so sweet that they seemed the speech of angels, succeeded those bitter and biting utterances that foretell approaching division. Before long, the marquis and the marquise only saw each other at hours when they could not avoid meeting; then, on the pretext of necessary journeys, and presently without any pretext at all, the marquis would go away for three-quarters of a year, and once more the marquise found herself widowed. Whatever contemporary account one may consult, one finds them all agreeing to declare that she was always the same—that is to say, full of patience, calmness, and becoming behaviour—and it is rare to find such a unanimity of opinion about a young and beautiful woman.

About this time the marquis, finding it unendur-

able to be alone with his wife during the short spaces of time which he spent at home, invited his two brothers, the chevalier and the abbé de Ganges, to come and live with him. He had a third brother, who, as the second son, bore the title of comte, and who was colonel of the Languedoc regiment, but as this gentleman played no part in this story we shall not concern ourselves with him.

The abbé de Ganges, who bore that title without belonging to the Church, had assumed it in order to enjoy its privileges: he was a kind of wit, writing madrigals and *bouts-rimés* [1] on occasion, a handsome man enough, though in moments of impatience his eyes would take a strangely cruel expression; as dissolute and shameless to boot, as though he had really belonged to the clergy of the period.

The chevalier de Ganges, who shared in some measure the beauty so profusely showered upon the family, was one of those feeble men who enjoy their own nullity, and grow on to old age inapt alike for good and evil, unless some nature of a stronger stamp lays hold on them and drags them like faint and pallid satellites in its wake. This was what befell the chevalier in respect of his brother: submitted to an influence of which he himself was not aware, and against which, had he but suspected it, he would have rebelled with the obstinacy of a child,

[1] *Bouts-rimés* are verses written to a given set of rhymes.

he was a machine obedient to the will of another mind and to the passions of another heart, a machine which was all the more terrible in that no movement of instinct or of reason could, in his case, arrest the impulse given.

Moreover, this influence which the abbé had acquired over the chevalier extended, in some degree also, to the marquis. Having as a younger son no fortune, having no revenue, for though he wore a Churchman's robes he did not fulfil a Churchman's functions, he had succeeded in persuading the marquis, who was rich, not only in the enjoyment of his own fortune, but also in that of his wife, which was likely to be nearly doubled at the death of M. de Nochères, that some zealous man was needed who would devote himself to the ordering of his house and the management of his property, and had offered himself for the post. The marquis had very gladly accepted, being, as we have said, tired by this time of his solitary homelife; and the abbé had brought with him the chevalier, who followed him like his shadow, and who was no more regarded than if he had really possessed no body.

The marquise often confessed afterwards that when she first saw these two men, although their outward aspect was perfectly agreeable, she felt herself seized by a painful impression, and that the fortune-teller's prediction of a violent death, which she

had so long forgotten, flashed out like lightning before her eyes. The effect on the two brothers was not of the same kind: the beauty of the marquise struck them both, although in different ways. The chevalier was in ecstacies of admiration, as though before a beautiful statue, but the impression that she made upon him was that which would have been made by marble, and if the chevalier had been left to himself the consequences of this admiration would have been no less harmless. Moreover, the chevalier did not attempt either to exaggerate or to conceal this impression, and allowed his sister-in-law to see in what manner she struck him. The abbé, on the contrary, was seized at first sight with a deep and violent desire to possess this woman—the most beautiful whom he had ever met; but being as perfectly capable of mastering his sensations as the chevalier was incapable, he merely allowed such words of compliment to escape him as weigh neither with him who utters nor her who hears them; and yet, before the close of this first interview, the abbé had decided in his irrevocable will that this woman should be his.

As for the marquise, although the impression produced by her two brothers-in-law could never be entirely effaced, the wit of the abbé, to which he gave, with amazing facility, whatever turn he chose, and the complete nullity of the chevalier brought

her to certain feelings of less repulsion towards them: for indeed the marquise had one of those souls which never suspect evil, as long as it will take the trouble to assume any veil at all of seeming, and which only recognise it with regret when it resumes its true shape.

Meanwhile the arrival of these two new inmates soon spread a little more life and gaiety through the house. Furthermore, greatly to the astonishment of the marquise, her husband, who had so long been indifferent to her beauty, seemed to remark afresh that she was too charming to be despised; his words accordingly began little by little to express an affection that had long since gradually disappeared from them. The marquise had never ceased to love him; she had suffered the loss of his love with resignation, she hailed its return with joy, and three months elapsed that resembled those which had long ceased to be more to the poor wife than a distant and half-worn-out memory.

Thus she had, with the supreme facility of youth, always ready to be happy, taken up her gladness again, without even asking what genius had brought back to her the treasure which she had thought lost, when she received an invitation from a lady of the neighbourhood to spend some days in her country house. Her husband and her two brothers-in-law, invited with her, were of the party, and accompanied

her. A great hunting party had been arranged beforehand, and almost immediately upon arriving everyone began to prepare for taking part in it.

The abbé, whose talents had made him indispensable in every company, declared that for that day he was the marquise's cavalier, a title which his sister-in-law, with her usual amiability, confirmed. Each of the huntsmen, following this example, made choice of a lady to whom to dedicate his attentions throughout the day; then, this chivalrous arrangement being completed, all present directed their course towards the place of meeting.

That happened which almost always happens: the dogs hunted on their own account. Two or three sportsmen only followed the dogs; the rest got lost. The abbé, in his character of esquire to the marquise, had not left her for a moment, and had managed so cleverly that he was alone with her—an opportunity which he had been seeking for a month previously with no less care than the marquise had been using to avoid it. No sooner, therefore, did the marquise believe herself aware that the abbé had intentionally turned aside from the hunt than she attempted to gallop her horse in the opposite direction from that which she had been following; but the abbé stopped her. The marquise neither could nor would enter upon a struggle; she resigned herself, therefore, to hearing what the

abbé had to say to her, and her face assumed that air of haughty disdain which women so well know how to put on when they wish a man to understand that he has nothing to hope from them. There was an instant's silence; the abbé was the first to break it.

"Madame," said he, "I ask your pardon for having used this means to speak to you alone; but since, in spite of my rank of brother-in-law, you did not seem inclined to grant me that favour if I had asked it, I thought it would be better for me to deprive you of the power to refuse it me."

"If you have hesitated to ask me so simple a thing, monsieur," replied the marquise, "and if you have taken such precautions to compel me to listen to you, it must, no doubt, be because you knew beforehand that the words you had to say to me were such as I could not hear. Have the goodness, therefore, to reflect, before you open this conversation, that here as elsewhere I reserve the right—and I warn you of it—to interrupt what you may say at the moment when it may cease to seem to me befitting."

"As to that, madame," said the abbé, "I think I can answer for it that whatever it may please me to say to you, you will hear to the end; but indeed the matters are so simple that there is no need to make you uneasy beforehand: I wished to ask you,

madame, whether you have perceived a change in the conduct of your husband towards you."

"Yes, monsieur," replied the marquise, "and no single day has passed in which I have not thanked Heaven for this happiness."

"And you have been wrong, madame," returned the abbé, with one of those smiles that were peculiar to himself; "Heaven has nothing to do with it. Thank Heaven for having made you the most beautiful and charming of women, and that will be enough thanksgiving without despoiling me of such as belong to my share."

"I do not understand you, monsieur," said the marquise in an icy tone.

"Well, I will make myself comprehensible, my dear sister-in-law. I am the worker of the miracle for which you are thanking Heaven; to me therefore belongs your gratitude. Heaven is rich enough not to rob the poor."

"You are right, monsieur: if it is really to you that I owe this return, the cause of which I did not know, I will thank you in the first place; and then afterwards I will thank Heaven for having inspired you with this good thought."

"Yes," answered the abbé, "but Heaven, which has inspired me with a good thought, may equally well inspire me with a bad one, if the good thought does not bring me what I expect from it."

"What do you mean, monsieur?"

"That there has never been more than one will in the family, and that will is mine; that the minds of my two brothers turn according to the fancy of that will like weathercocks before the wind, and that he who has blown hot can blow cold."

"I am still waiting for you to explain yourself, monsieur."

"Well, then, my dear sister-in-law, since you are pleased not to understand me, I will explain myself more clearly. My brother turned from you through jealousy; I wished to give you an idea of my power over him, and from extreme indifference I have brought him back, by showing him that he suspected you wrongly, to the ardours of the warmest love. Well, I need only tell him that I was mistaken, and fix his wandering suspicions upon any man whatever, and I shall take him away from you, even as I have brought him back. I need give you no proof of what I say; you know perfectly well that I am speaking the truth."

"And what object had you, in acting this part?"

"To prove to you, madame, that at my will I can cause you to be sad or joyful, cherished or neglected, adored or hated. Madame, listen to me: I love you."

"You insult me, monsieur!" cried the marquise,

trying to withdraw the bridle of her horse from the abbé's hands.

"No fine words, my dear sister-in-law; for, with me, I warn you, they will be lost. To tell a woman one loves her is never an insult; only there are a thousand different ways of obliging her to respond to that love. The error is to make a mistake in the way that one employs—that is the whole of the matter."

"And may I inquire which you have chosen?" asked the marquise, with a crushing smile of contempt.

"The only one that could succeed with a calm, cold, strong woman like you, the conviction that your interest requires you to respond to my love."

"Since you profess to know me so well," answered the marquise, with another effort, as unsuccessful as the former, to free the bridle of her horse, "you should know how a woman like me would receive such an overture; say to yourself what I might say to you, and above all, what I might say to my husband."

The abbé smiled.

"Oh, as to that," he returned, "you can do as you please, madame. Tell your husband whatever you choose; repeat our conversation word for word; add whatever your memory may furnish, true or false, that may be most convincing against me;

then, when you have thoroughly given him his cue, when you think yourself sure of him, I will say two words to him, and turn him inside out like this glove. That is what I had to say to you, madame. I will not detain you longer. You may have in me a devoted friend or a mortal enemy. Reflect."

At these words the abbé loosed his hold upon the bridle of the marquise's horse and left her free to guide it as she would. The marquise put her beast to a trot, so as to show neither fear nor haste. The abbé followed her, and both rejoined the hunt.

The abbé had spoken truly. The marquise, notwithstanding the threat which she had made, reflected upon the influence which this man had over her husband, and of which she had often had proof: she kept silence, therefore, and hoped that he had made himself seem worse than he was, to frighten her. On this point she was strangely mistaken.

The abbé, however, wished to see, in the first place, whether the marquise's refusal was due to personal antipathy or to real virtue. The chevalier, as has been said, was handsome; he had that usage of good society which does instead of mind, and he joined to it the obstinacy of a stupid man; the abbé undertook to persuade him that he was in love with the marquise. It was not a difficult matter. We have described the impression made upon the chevalier by the first sight of Madame de Ganges; but,

knowing beforehand the reputation of austerity that his sister-in-law had acquired, he had not the remotest idea of paying court to her. Yielding, indeed, to the influence which she exercised upon all who came in contact with her, the chevalier had remained her devoted servant; and the marquise, having no reason to mistrust civilities which she took for signs of friendliness, and considering his position as her husband's brother, treated him with less circumspection than was her custom.

The abbé sought him out, and, having made sure they were alone, said, "Chevalier, we both love the same woman, and that woman is our brother's wife; do not let us thwart each other: I am master of my passion, and can the more easily sacrifice it to you that I believe you are the man preferred; try, therefore, to obtain some assurance of the love which I suspect the marquise of having for you; and from the day when you reach that point I will withdraw, but otherwise, if you fail, give up your place civilly to me, that I may try, in my turn, whether her heart is really impregnable, as everybody says."

The chevalier had never thought of the possibility of winning the marquise; but from the moment in which his brother, with no apparent motive of personal interest, aroused the idea that he might be beloved, every spark of passion and of vanity that still existed in this automaton took fire, and he began

to be doubly assiduous and attentive to his sister-in-law. She, who had never suspected any evil in this quarter, treated the chevalier at first with a kindliness that was heightened by her scorn for the abbé. But, before long, the chevalier, misunderstanding the grounds of this kindliness, explained himself more clearly. The marquise, amazed and at first incredulous, allowed him to say enough to make his intentions perfectly clear; then she stopped him, as she had done the abbé, by some of those galling words which women derive from their indifference even more than from their virtue.

At this check, the chevalier, who was far from possessing his brother's strength and determination, lost all hope, and came candidly to own to the latter the sad result of his attentions and his love. This was what the abbé had awaited, in the first place for the satisfaction of his own vanity, and in the second place for the means of carrying out his schemes. He worked upon the chevalier's humiliation until he had wrought it into a solid hatred; and then, sure of having him for a supporter and even for an accomplice, he began to put into execution his plan against the marquise.

The consequence was soon shown in a renewal of alienation on the part of M. de Ganges. A young man whom the marquise sometimes met in society, and to whom, on account of his wit, she listened

perhaps a little more willingly than to others, became, if not the cause, at least the excuse of a fresh burst of jealousy. This jealousy was exhibited as on previous occasions, by quarrels remote from the real grievance; but the marquise was not deceived: she recognised in this change the fatal hand of her brother-in-law. But this certainty, instead of drawing her towards him, increased her repulsion; and thenceforward she lost no opportunity of showing him not only that repulsion but also the contempt that accompanied it.

Matters remained in this state for some months. Every day the marquise perceived her husband growing colder, and although the spies were invisible she felt herself surrounded by a watchfulness that took note of the most private details of her life. As to the abbé and the chevalier, they were as usual; only the abbé had hidden his hate behind a smile that was habitual, and the chevalier his resentment behind that cold and stiff dignity in which dull minds enfold themselves when they believe themselves injured in their vanity.

In the midst of all this, M. Joannis de Nochères died, and added to the already considerable fortune of his granddaughter another fortune of from six to seven hundred thousand livres.

This additional wealth became, on accruing to the marquise, what was then called, in countries

where the Roman law prevailed, a *paraphernal* estate —that is to say that, falling in after marriage, it was not included in the dowry brought by the wife, and that she could dispose freely both of the capital and the income, which might not be administered even by her husband without a power of attorney, and of which she could dispose at pleasure, by donation or by will. And in fact, a few days after the marquise had entered into possession of her grandfather's estate, her husband and his brothers learned that she had sent for a notary in order to be instructed as to her rights. This step betokened an intention of separating this inheritance from the common property of the marriage; for the behaviour of the marquis towards his wife—of which within himself he often recognised the injustice—left him little hope of any other explanation.

About this time a strange event happened. At a dinner given by the marquise, a cream was served at dessert: all those who partook of this cream were ill; the marquis and his two brothers, who had not touched it, felt no evil effects. The remainder of this cream, which was suspected of having caused illness to the guests, and particularly to the marquise, who had taken of it twice, was analysed, and the presence of arsenic in it demonstrated. Only, having been mixed with milk, which is its antidote,

the poison had lost some of its power, and had produced but half the expected effect. As no serious disaster had followed this occurrence, the blame was thrown upon a servant, who was said to have mistaken arsenic for sugar, and everybody forgot it, or appeared to forget it.

The marquis, however, seemed to be gradually and naturally drawing nearer again to his wife; but this time Madame de Ganges was not deceived by his returning kindness. There, as in his alienation, she saw the selfish hand of the abbé: he had persuaded his brother that seven hundred thousand livres more in the house would make it worth while to overlook some levities of behaviour; and the marquis, obeying the impulse given, was trying, by kind dealing, to oppose his wife's still unsettled intention of making a will.

Towards the autumn there was talk of going to spend that season at Ganges, a little town situated in Lower Languedoc, in the diocese of Montpellier, seven leagues from that town, and nineteen from Avignon. Although this was natural enough, since the marquis was lord of the town and had a castle there, the marquise was seized by a strange shudder when she heard the proposal. Remembrance of the prediction made to her returned immediately to her mind. The recent and ill explained attempt to poison her, too, very naturally added to her fears.

Without directly and positively suspecting her brothers-in-law of that crime, she knew that in them she had two implacable enemies. This journey to a little town, this abode in a lonely castle, amid new, unknown neighbours, seemed to her of no good omen; but open opposition would have been ridiculous. On what grounds, indeed, could she base resistance? The marquise could only own her terrors by accusing her husband and her brothers-in-law. And of what could she accuse them? The incident of the poisoned cream was not a conclusive proof. She resolved accordingly to lock up all her fears in her heart, and to commit herself to the hands of God.

Nevertheless, she would not leave Avignon without signing the will which she had contemplated making ever since M. de Nochères' death. A notary was called in who drew up the document. The Marquise de Ganges made her mother, Madame de Rossan, her sole inheritor, and left in her charge the duty of choosing between the testatrix's two children as to which of them should succeed to the estate. These two children were, one a boy of six years old, the other a girl of five. But this was not enough for the marquise, so deep was her impression that she would not survive this fatal journey; she gathered together, secretly and at night, the magistrates of Avignon and several persons of

quality, belonging to the first families of the town, and there, before them, verbally at first, declared that, in case of her death, she begged the honourable witnesses whom she had assembled on purpose, not to recognise as valid, voluntary, or freely written anything except the will which she had signed the day before, and affirmed beforehand that any later will which might be produced would be the effect of fraud or of violence. Then, having made this verbal declaration, the marquise repeated it in writing, signed the paper containing it, and gave the paper to be preserved by the honour of those whom she constituted its guardians. Such a precaution, taken with such minute detail, aroused the lively curiosity of her hearers. Many pressing questions were put to the marquise, but nothing could be extracted from her except that she had reasons for her action which she could not declare. The cause of this assemblage remained a secret, and every person who formed part of it promised the marquise not to reveal it.

On the next day, which was that preceding her departure for Ganges, the marquise visited all the charitable institutions and religious communities in Avignon; she left liberal alms everywhere, with the request that prayers and masses should be said for her, in order to obtain from God's grace that she should not be suffered to die without receiving

the sacraments of the Church. In the evening, she took leave of all her friends with the affection and the tears of a person convinced that she was bidding them a last farewell; and finally she spent the whole night in prayer, and the maid who came to wake her found her kneeling in the same spot where she had left her the night before.

The family set out for Ganges; the journey was performed without accident. On reaching the castle, the marquise found her mother-in-law there; she was a woman of remarkable distinction and piety, and her presence, although it was to be but temporary, reassured the poor fearful marquise a little. Arrangements had been made beforehand at the old castle, and the most convenient and elegant of the rooms had been assigned to the marquise; it was on the first floor, and looked out upon a courtyard shut in on all sides by stables.

On the first evening that she was to sleep here, the marquise explored the room with the greatest attention. She inspected the cupboards, sounded the walls, examined the tapestry, and found nothing anywhere that could confirm her terrors, which, indeed, from that time began to decrease. At the end of a certain time, however, the marquis's mother left Ganges to return to Montpellier. Two days after her departure, the marquis talked of important business which required him to go back to Avignon,

and he too left the castle. The marquise thus remained alone with the abbé, the chevalier, and a chaplain named Perette, who had been attached for five-and-twenty years to the family of the marquis. The rest of the household consisted of a few servants.

The marquise's first care, on arriving at the castle, had been to collect a little society for herself in the town. This was easy: not only did her rank make it an honour to belong to her circle, her kindly graciousness also inspired at first sight the desire of having her for a friend. The marquise thus endured less dulness than she had at first feared. This precaution was by no means uncalled for; instead of spending only the autumn at Ganges, the marquise was obliged, in consequence of letters from her husband, to spend the winter there. During the whole of this time the abbé and the chevalier seemed to have completely forgotten their original designs upon her, and had again resumed the conduct of respectful, attentive brothers. But with all this, M. de Ganges remained estranged, and the marquise, who had not ceased to love him, though she began to lose her fear, did not lose her grief.

One day the abbé entered her room suddenly enough to surprise her before she had time to dry her tears; the secret being thus half surprised, he easily obtained a knowledge of the whole. The

marquise owned to him that happiness in this world was impossible for her so long as her husband led this separate and hostile life. The abbé tried to console her; but amid his consolations he told her that the grief which she was suffering had its source in herself; that her husband was naturally wounded by her distrust of him—a distrust of which the will, executed by her, was a proof, all the more humiliating because public, and that, while that will existed, she could expect no advances towards reconciliation from her husband. For that time the conversation ended there.

Some days later, the abbé came into the marquise's room with a letter which he had just received from his brother. This letter, supposed confidential, was filled with tender complaints of his wife's conduct towards him, and showed, through every sentence, a depth of affection which only wrongs as serious as those from which the marquis considered himself to be feeling could counterbalance. The marquise was, at first, very much touched by this letter; but having soon reflected that just sufficient time had elapsed since the explanation between herself and the abbé for the marquis to be informed of it, she awaited further and stronger proofs before changing her mind.

From day to day, however, the abbé, under the pretext of reconciling the husband and wife, became

more pressing upon the matter of the will, and the marquise, to whom this insistence seemed rather alarming, began to experience some of her former fears. Finally, the abbé pressed her so hard as to make her reflect that since, after the precautions which she had taken at Avignon, a revocation could have no result, it would be better to seem to yield rather than irritate this man, who inspired her with so great a fear, by constant and obstinate refusals. The next time that he returned to the subject she accordingly replied that she was ready to offer her husband this new proof of her love if it would bring him back to her, and having ordered a notary to be sent for, she made a new will, in the presence of the abbé and the chevalier, and constituted the marquis her residuary legatee. This second instrument bore date the 5th of May 1667. The abbé and the chevalier expressed the greatest joy that this subject of discord was at last removed, and offered themselves as guarantees, on their brother's behalf, of a better future. Some days were passed in this hope, which a letter from the marquis came to confirm; this letter at the same time announced his speedy return to Ganges.

On the 16th of May, the marquise, who for a month or two had not been well, determined to take medicine; she therefore informed the chemist of what she wanted, and asked him to make her up

something at his discretion and send it to her the next day. Accordingly, at the agreed hour in the morning, the draught was brought to the marquise; but it looked to her so black and so thick that she felt some doubt of the skill of its compounder, shut it up in a cupboard in her room without saying anything of the matter, and took from her dressing-case some pills, of a less efficacious nature indeed, but to which she was accustomed, and which were not so repugnant to her.

The hour in which the marquise was to take this medicine was hardly over when the abbé and the chevalier sent to know how she was. She replied that she was quite well, and invited them to a collation which she was giving about four o'clock to the ladies who made up her little circle. An hour afterwards the abbé and the chevalier sent a second time to inquire after her; the marquise, without paying particular attention to this excessive civility, which she remembered afterwards, sent word as before that she was perfectly well.

The marquise had remained in bed to do the honours of her little feast, and never had she felt more cheerful. At the hour named all her guests arrived; the abbé and the chevalier were ushered in, and the meal was served. Neither one nor the other would share it; the abbé indeed sat down to table, but the chevalier remained leaning on the foot of

the bed. The abbé appeared anxious, and only roused himself with a start from his absorption; then he seemed to drive away some dominant idea, but soon the idea, stronger than his will, plunged him again into a reverie, a state which struck everyone the more particularly because it was far from his usual temper. As to the chevalier, his eyes were fixed constantly upon his sister-in-law, but in this there was not, as in his brother's behaviour, anything surprising, since the marquise had never looked so beautiful.

The meal over, the company took leave. The abbé escorted the ladies downstairs; the chevalier remained with the marquise; but hardly had the abbé left the room when Madame de Ganges saw the chevalier turn pale and drop in a sitting position —he had been standing—on the foot of the bed. The marquise, uneasy, asked what was the matter; but before he could reply, her attention was called to another quarter. The abbé, as pale and as disturbed as the chevalier, came back into the room, carrying in his hands a glass and a pistol, and double-locked the door behind him. Terrified at this spectacle, the marquise half raised herself in her bed, gazing voiceless and wordless. Then the abbé approached her, his lips trembling, his hair bristling and his eyes blazing, and, presenting to her the glass and the pistol, "Madame," said he,

after a moment of terrible silence, "choose, whether poison, fire, or"—he made a sign to the chevalier, who drew his sword—"or steel."

The marquise had one moment's hope: at the motion which she saw the chevalier make she thought he was coming to her assistance; but being soon undeceived, and finding herself between two men, both threatening her, she slipped from her bed and fell on her knees.

"What have I done," she cried, "oh, my God! that you should thus decree my death, and after having made yourselves judges should make yourselves executioners? I am guilty of no fault towards you except of having been too faithful in my duty to my husband, who is your brother."

Then seeing that it was vain to continue imploring the abbé, whose looks and gestures spoke a mind made up, she turned towards the chevalier.

"And you too, brother," said she, "oh, God, God! you, too! Oh, have pity on me, in the name of Heaven!"

But he, stamping his foot and pressing the point of his sword to her bosom, answered—

"Enough, madam, enough; take your choice without delay; for if you do not take it, we will take it for you."

The marquise turned once again to the abbé, and her forehead struck the muzzle of the pistol. Then

she saw that she must die indeed, and choosing of the three forms of death that which seemed to her the least terrible, "Give me the poison, then," said she, "and may God forgive you my death!"

With these words she took the glass, but the thick black liquid of which it was full aroused such repulsion that she would have attempted a last appeal; but a horrible imprecation from the abbé and a threatening movement from his brother took from her the very last gleam of hope. She put the glass to her lips, and murmuring once more, "God! Saviour! have pity on me!" she swallowed the contents.

As she did so a few drops of the liquid fell upon her breast, and instantly burned her skin like live coals; indeed, this infernal draught was composed of arsenic and sublimate infused in *aqua-fortis;* then, thinking that no more would be required of her, she dropped the glass.

The marquise was mistaken: the abbé picked it up, and observing that all the sediment had remained at the bottom, he gathered together on a silver bodkin all that had coagulated on the sides of the glass and all that had sunk to the bottom, and presenting this ball, which was about the size of a nut, to the marquise, on the end of the bodkin, he said, "Come, madame, you must swallow the holy-water sprinkler."

The marquise opened her lips, with resignation; but instead of doing as the abbé commanded, she kept this remainder of the poison in her mouth, threw herself on the bed with a scream, and clasping the pillows, in her pain, she put out the poison between the sheets, unperceived by her assassins; and then turning back to them, folded her hands in entreaty and said, "In the name of God, since you have killed my body, at least do not destroy my soul, but send me a confessor."

Cruel though the abbé and the chevalier were, they were no doubt beginning to weary of such a scene; moreover, the mortal deed was accomplished: after what she had drunk, the marquise could live but a few minutes; at her petition they went out, locking the door behind them. But no sooner did the marquise find herself alone than the possibility of flight presented itself to her. She ran to the window: this was but twenty-two feet above the ground, but the earth below was covered with stones and rubbish. The marquise, being only in her night-dress, hastened to slip on a silk petticoat; but at the moment when she finished tying it round her waist she heard a step approaching her room, and believing that her murderers were returning to make an end of her, she flew like a madwoman to the window. At the moment of her setting foot on the window ledge, the door opened: the marquise, ceasing to

consider anything, flung herself down, head first. Fortunately, the new-comer, who was the castle chaplain, had time to reach out and seize her skirt. The skirt, not strong enough to bear the weight of the marquise, tore; but its resistance, slight though it was, sufficed nevertheless to change the direction of her body: the marquise, whose head would have been shattered on the stones, fell on her feet instead, and beyond their being bruised by the stones, received no injury. Half stunned though she was by her fall, the marquise saw something coming after her, and sprang aside. It was an enormous pitcher of water, beneath which the priest, when he saw her escaping him, had tried to crush her; but either because he had ill carried out his attempt or because the marquise had really had time to move away, the vessel was shattered at her feet without touching her, and the priest, seeing that he had missed his aim, ran to warn the abbé and the chevalier that the victim was escaping.

As for the marquise, she had hardly touched the ground, when with admirable presence of mind she pushed the end of one of her long plaits so far down her throat as to provoke a fit of vomiting; this was the more easily done that she had eaten heartily of the collation, and happily the presence of the food had prevented the poison from attacking the coats of the stomach so violently as would otherwise have

been the case. Scarcely had she vomited when a tame boar swallowed what she had rejected, and and falling into a convulsion, died immediately.

As we have said, the room looked upon an enclosed courtyard; and the marquise at first thought that in leaping from her room into this court she had only changed her prison; but soon perceiving a light that flickered from an upper window of one of the stables, she ran thither, and found a groom who was just going to bed.

"In the name of Heaven, my good man," said she to him, "save me! I am poisoned! They want to kill me! Do not desert me, I entreat you! Have pity on me, open this stable for me; let me get away! Let me escape!"

The groom did not understand much of what the marquise said to him; but seeing a woman with disordered hair, half naked, asking help of him, he took her by the arm, led her through the stables, opened a door for her, and the marquise found herself in the street. Two women were passing; the groom put her into their hands, without being able to explain to them what he did not know himself. As for the marquise, she seemed able to say nothing beyond these words: "Save me! I am poisoned! In the name of Heaven, save me!"

All at once she escaped from their hands and began to run like a mad woman; she had seen,

twenty steps away, on the threshold of the door by which she had come, her two murderers in pursuit of her.

Then they rushed after her; she shrieking that she was poisoned, they shrieking that she was mad; and all this happening amid a crowd which, not knowing what part to take, divided and made way for the victim and the murderers. Terror gave the marquise superhuman strength: the woman who was accustomed to walk in silken shoes upon velvet carpets, ran with bare and bleeding feet over stocks and stones, vainly asking help, which none gave her; for, indeed, seeing her thus, in mad flight, in a night-dress, with flying hair, her only garment a tattered silk petticoat, it was difficult not to think that this woman was, as her brothers-in-law said, mad.

At last the chevalier came up with her, stopped her, dragged her, in spite of her screams, into the nearest house, and closed the door behind them, while the abbé, standing at the threshold with a pistol in his hand, threatened to blow out the brains of any person who should approach.

The house into which the chevalier and the marquise had gone belonged to one M. Desprats, who at the moment was from home, and whose wife was entertaining several of her friends. The marquise and the chevalier, still struggling together, entered the room where the company was assembled: as

among the ladies present were several who also visited the marquise, they immediately arose, in the greatest amazement, to give her the assistance that she implored; but the chevalier hastily pushed them aside, repeating that the marquise was mad. To this reiterated accusation—to which, indeed, appearances lent only too great a probability—the marquise replied by showing her burnt neck and her blackened lips, and wringing her hands in pain, cried out that she was poisoned, that she was going to die, and begged urgently for milk, or at least for water. Then the wife of a Protestant minister, whose name was Madame Brunel, slipped into her hand a box of orviétan, some pieces of which she hastened to swallow, while another lady gave her a glass of water; but at the instant when she was lifting it to her mouth, the chevalier broke it between her teeth, and one of the pieces of glass cut her lips. At this, all the women would have flung themselves upon the chevalier; but the marquise, fearing that he would only become more enraged, and hoping to disarm him, asked, on the contrary, that she might be left alone with him: all the company, yielding to her desire, passed into the next room; this was what the chevalier, on his part, too, asked.

Scarcely were they alone, when the marquise, joining her hands, knelt to him and said in the gentlest and most appealing voice that it was pos-

sible to use, " Chevalier, my dear brother, will you not have pity upon me, who have always had so much affection for you, and who, even now, would give my blood for your service? You know that the things I am saying are not merely empty words; and yet how is it you are treating me, though I have not deserved it? And what will everyone say to such dealings? Ah, brother, what a great unhappiness is mine, to have been so cruelly treated by you! And yet—yes, brother—if you will deign to have pity on me and to save my life, I swear, by my hope of heaven, to keep no remembrance of what has happened, and to consider you always as my protector and my friend."

All at once the marquise rose with a great cry and clasped her hand to her right side. While she was speaking, and before she perceived what he was doing, the chevalier had drawn his sword, which was very short, and using it as a dagger, had struck her in the breast; this first blow was followed by a second, which came in contact with the shoulder blade, and so was prevented from going farther. At these two blows the marquise rushed towards the door of the room into which the ladies had retired, crying, " Help! He is killing me! "

But during the time that she took to cross the room the chevalier stabbed her five times in the back with his sword, and would no doubt have done

more, if at the last blow his sword had not broken; indeed, he had struck with such force that the fragment remained embedded in her shoulder, and the marquise fell forward on the floor, in a pool of her blood, which was flowing all round her and spreading through the room.

The chevalier thought he had killed her, and hearing the women running to her assistance, he rushed from the room. The abbé was still at the door, pistol in hand; the chevalier took him by the arm to drag him away, and as the abbé hesitated to follow, he said—

"Let us go, abbé; the business is done."

The chevalier and the abbé had taken a few steps in the street when a window opened and the women who had found the marquise expiring called out for help: at these cries the abbé stopped short, and holding back the chevalier by the arm, demanded—

"What was it you said, chevalier? If they are calling help, is she not dead, after all?"

"*Ma foi,* go and see for yourself," returned the chevalier. "I have done enough for my share; it is your turn now."

"*Pardieu,* that is quite my opinion," cried the abbé; and rushing back to the house, he flung himself into the room at the moment when the women, lifting the marquise with great difficulty, for she was so weak that she could no longer help herself, were

attempting to carry her to bed. The abbé pushed them away, and arriving at the marquise, put his pistol to her heart; but Madame Brunel, the same who had previously given the marquise a box of orviétan, lifted up the barrel with her hand, so that the shot went off into the air, and the bullet instead of striking the marquise lodged in the cornice of the ceiling. The abbé then took the pistol by the barrel and gave Madame Brunel so violent a blow upon the head with the butt that she staggered and almost fell; he was about to strike her again, but all the women uniting against him, pushed him, with thousands of maledictions, out of the room, and locked the door behind him. The two assassins, taking advantage of the darkness, fled from Ganges, and reached Aubenas, which is a full league away, about ten in the evening.

Meanwhile the women were doing all they could for the marquise. Their first intention, as we have already said, was to put her to bed, but the broken sword blade made her unable to lie down, and they tried in vain to pull it out, so deeply had it entered the bone. Then the marquise herself showed Madame Brunel what method to take: the operating lady was to sit on the bed, and while the others helped to hold up the marquise, was to seize the blade with both hands, and pressing her knees against the patient's back, to pull violently and with

a great jerk. This plan at last succeeded, and the marquise was able to get to bed; it was nine in the evening, and this horrible tragedy had been going on for nearly three hours.

The magistrates of Ganges, being informed of what had happened, and beginning to believe that it was really a case of murder, came in person, with a guard, to the marquise. As soon as she saw them come in she recovered strength, and raising herself in bed, so great was her fear, clasped her hands and besought their protection; for she always expected to see one or the other of her murderers return. The magistrates told her to reassure herself, set armed men to guard all the approaches to the house, and while physicians and surgeons were summoned in hot haste from Montpellier, they on their part sent word to the Baron de Trissan, provost of Languedoc, of the crime that had just been committed, and gave him the names and the description of the murderers. That official at once sent people after them, but it was already too late: he learned that the abbé and the chevalier had slept at Aubenas on the night of the murder, that there they had reproached each other for their unskilfulness, and had come near cutting each other's throats, that finally they had departed before daylight, and had taken a boat, near Agde, from a beach called the "Gras de Palaval."

The Marquis de Ganges was at Avignon, where he was prosecuting a servant of his who had robbed him of two hundred crowns, when he heard news of the event. He turned horribly pale as he listened to the messenger's story, then falling into a violent fury against his brothers, he swore that they should have no executioners other than himself. Nevertheless, though he was so uneasy about the marquise's condition, he waited until the next day in the afternoon before setting forth, and during the interval he saw some of his friends at Avignon without saying anything to them of the matter. He did not reach Ganges until four days after the murder, then he went to the house of M. Desprats and asked to see his wife, whom some kind priests had already prepared for the meeting; and the marquise, as soon as she heard of his arrival, consented to receive him. The marquis immediately entered the room, with his eyes full of tears, tearing his hair, and giving every token of the deepest despair.

The marquise received her husband like a forgiving wife and a dying Christian. She scarcely even uttered some slight reproaches about the manner in which he had deserted her; moreover, the marquis having complained to a monk of these reproaches, and the monk having reported his complaints to the marquise, she called her husband to her bedside, at a

moment when she was surrounded by people, and made him a public apology, begging him to attribute the words that seemed to have wounded him to the effect of her sufferings, and not to any failure in her regard for him. The marquis, left alone with his wife, tried to take advantage of this reconciliation to induce her to annul the declaration that she had made before the magistrates of Avignon; for the vice-legate and his officers, faithful to the promises made to the marquise, had refused to register the fresh donation which she had made at Ganges, according to the suggestions of the abbé, and which the latter had sent off, the very moment it was signed, to his brother. But on this point the marquise was immovably resolute, declaring that this fortune was reserved for her children and therefore sacred to her, and that she could make no alteration in what had been done at Avignon, since it represented her genuine and final wishes. Notwithstanding this declaration, the marquis did not cease to remain beside his wife and to bestow upon her every care possible to a devoted and attentive husband.

Two days later than the Marquis de Ganges arrived Madame de Rossan: great was her amazement, after all the rumours that were already in circulation about the marquis, at finding her daughter in the hands of him whom she regarded as one

of her murderers. But the marquise, far from sharing that opinion, did all she could, not only to make her mother feel differently, but even to induce her to embrace the marquis as a son. This blindness on the part of the marquise caused Madame de Rossan so much grief that notwithstanding her profound affection for her daughter she would only stay two days, and in spite of the entreaties that the dying woman made to her, she returned home, not allowing anything to stop her. This departure was a great grief to the marquise, and was the reason why she begged with renewed entreaties to be taken to Montpellier. The very sight of the place where she had been so cruelly tortured continually brought before her, not only the remembrance of the murder, but the image of the murderers, who in her brief moments of sleep so haunted her that she sometimes awoke suddenly, uttering shrieks and calling for help. Unfortunately, the physician considered her too weak to bear removal, and declared that no change of place could be made without extreme danger.

Then, when she heard this verdict, which had to be repeated to her, and which her bright and lively complexion and brilliant eyes seemed to contradict, the marquise turned all her thoughts towards holy things, and thought only of dying like a saint after having already suffered like a martyr. She con-

sequently asked to receive the last sacrament, and while it was being sent for, she repeated her apologies to her husband and her forgiveness of his brothers, and this with a gentleness that, joined to her beauty, made her whole personality appear angelic. When, however, the priest bearing the viaticum entered, this expression suddenly changed, and her face presented every token of the greatest terror. She had just recognised in the priest who was bringing her the last consolations of Heaven the infamous Perette, whom she could not but regard as an accomplice of the abbé and the chevalier, since, after having tried to hold her back, he had attempted to crush her beneath the pitcher of water which he had thrown at her from the window, and since, when he saw her escaping, he had run to warn her assassins and to set them on her track. She recovered herself quickly, however, and seeing that the priest, without any sign of remorse, was drawing near to her bedside, she would not cause so great a scandal as would have been caused by denouncing him at such a moment. Nevertheless, bending towards him, she said, " Father, I hope that, remembering what has passed, and in order to dispel fears that I may justifiably entertain, you will make no difficulty of partaking with me of the consecrated wafer; for I have sometimes heard it said that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, while remaining a

token of salvation, has been known to be made a principle of death."

The priest inclined his head as a sign of assent.

So the marquise communicated thus, taking a sacrament that she shared with one of her murderers, as an evidence that she forgave this one like the others and that she prayed God to forgive them as she herself did.

The following days passed without any apparent increase in her illness, the fever by which she was consumed rather enhancing her beauties, and imparting to her voice and gestures a vivacity which they had never had before. Thus everybody had begun to recover hope, except herself, who, feeling better than anyone else what was her true condition, never for a moment allowed herself any illusion, and keeping her son, who was seven years old, constantly beside her bed, bade him again and again look well at her, so that, young as he was, he might remember her all his life and never forget her in his prayers. The poor child would burst into tears and promise not only to remember her but also to avenge her when he was a man. At these words the marquise gently reproved him, telling him that all vengeance belonged to the king and to God, and that all cares of the kind must be left to those two great rulers of heaven and of earth.

On the 3rd of June, M. Catalan, a councillor,

appointed as a commissioner by the Parliament of Toulouse, arrived at Ganges, together with all the officials required by his commission; but he could not see the marquise that night, for she had dozed for some hours, and this sleep had left a sort of torpor upon her mind, which might have impaired the lucidity of her depositions. The next morning, without asking anybody's opinion, M. Catalan repaired to the house of M. Desprats, and in spite of some slight resistance on the part of those who were in charge of her, made his way to the presence of the marquise. The dying woman received him with an admirable presence of mind, that made M. Catalan think there had been an intention the night before to prevent any meeting between him and the person whom he was sent to interrogate. At first the marquise would relate nothing that had passed, saying that she could not at the same time accuse and forgive; but M. Catalan brought her to see that justice required truth from her before all things, since, in default of exact information, the law might go astray, and strike the innocent instead of the guilty. This last argument decided the marquise, and during the hour and a half that he spent alone with her she told him all the details of this horrible occurrence. On the morrow M. Catalan was to see her again; but on the morrow the marquise was, in truth, much worse. He assured himself of this by

his own eyes, and as he knew almost all that he wished to know, did not insist further, for fear of fatiguing her.

Indeed, from that day forward, such atrocious sufferings laid hold upon the marquise, that notwithstanding the firmness which she had always shown, and which she tried to maintain to the end, she could not prevent herself from uttering screams mingled with prayers. In this manner she spent the whole day of the 4th and part of the 5th. At last, on that day, which was a Sunday, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, she expired.

The body was immediately opened, and the physicians attested that the marquise had died solely from the power of the poison, none of the seven sword cuts which she had received being mortal. They found the stomach and bowels burned and the brain blackened. However, in spite of that infernal draught, which, says the official report, "would have killed a lioness in a few hours," the marquise struggled for nineteen days, so much, adds an account from which we have borrowed some of these details, so much did nature lovingly defend the beautiful body that she had taken so much trouble to make.

M. Catalan, the very moment he was informed of the marquise's death, having with him twelve guards belonging to the governor, ten archers, and a poqueton, despatched them to the marquis's castle with

orders to seize his person, that of the priest, and those of all the servants except the groom who had assisted the marquise in her flight. The officer in command of this little squad found the marquis walking up and down, melancholy and greatly disturbed, in the large hall of the castle, and when he signified to him the order of which he was the bearer, the marquis, without making any resistance, and as though prepared for what was happening to him, replied that he was ready to obey, and that moreover he had always intended to go before the Parliament to accuse the murderers of his wife. He was asked for the key of his cabinet, which he gave up, and the order was given to conduct him, with the other persons accused, to the prisons of Montpellier. As soon as the marquis came into that town, the report of his arrival spread with incredible rapidity from street to street. Then, as it was dark, lights came to all the windows, and people coming out with torches formed a torchlight procession, by means of which everybody could see him. He, like the priest, was mounted on a sorry hired horse, and entirely surrounded by archers, to whom, no doubt, he owed his life on this occasion; for the indignation against him was so great that everyone was egging on his neighbours to tear him limb from limb, which would certainly have come to pass had he not been so carefully defended and guarded.

Immediately upon receiving news of her daughter's death, Madame de Rossan took possession of all her property, and, making herself a party to the case, declared that she would never desist from her suit until her daughter's death was avenged. M. Catalan began the examination at once, and the first interrogation to which he submitted the marquis lasted eleven hours. Then soon afterwards he and the other persons accused were conveyed from the prisons of Montpellier to those of Toulouse. A crushing memorial by Madame de Rossan followed them, in which she demonstrated with absolute clearness that the marquis had participated in the crime of his two brothers, if not in act, in thought, desire, and intention.

The marquis's defence was very simple: it was his misfortune to have had two villains for brothers, who had made attempts first upon the honour and then upon the life of a wife whom he loved tenderly; they had destroyed her by a most atrocious death, and to crown his evil fortune, he, the innocent, was accused of having had a hand in that death. And, indeed, the examinations in the trial did not succeed in bringing any evidence against the marquis beyond moral presumptions, which, it appears, were insufficient to induce his judges to award a sentence of death.

A verdict was consequently given, upon the 21st

of August, 1667, which sentenced the abbé and the chevalier de Ganges to be broken alive on the wheel, the Marquis de Ganges to perpetual banishment from the kingdom, his property to be confiscated to the king, and himself to lose his nobility and to become incapable of succeeding to the property of his children. As for the priest Perette, he was sentenced to the galleys for life, after having previously been degraded from his clerical orders by the ecclesiastical authorities.

This sentence made as great a stir as the murder had done, and gave rise, in that period when "extenuating circumstances" had not been invented, to long and angry discussions. Indeed, the marquis either was guilty of complicity or was not: if he was not, the punishment was too cruel; if he was, the sentence was too light. Such was the opinion of Louis XIV., who remembered the beauty of the Marquis de Ganges; for, some time afterwards, when he was believed to have forgotten this unhappy affair, and when he was asked to pardon the Marquis de la Douze, who was accused of having poisoned his wife, the king answered, "There is no need for a pardon, since he belongs to the Parliament of Toulouse, and the Marquis de Ganges did very well without one."

It may easily be supposed that this melancholy event did not pass without inciting the wits of the

day to write a vast number of verses and *bouts-rimés* about the catastrophe by which one of the most beautiful women of the country was carried off. Readers who have a taste for that sort of literature are referred to the journals and memoirs of the times.

. . . . . .

Now, as our readers, if they have taken any interest at all in the terrible tale just narrated, will certainly ask what became of the murderers, we will proceed to follow their course until the moment when they disappeared, some into the night of death, some into the darkness of oblivion.

The priest Perette was the first to pay his debt to Heaven: he died at the oar on the way from Toulouse to Brest.

The chevalier withdrew to Venice, took service in the army of the Most Serene Republic, then at war with Turkey, and was sent to Candia, which the Mussulmans had been besieging for twenty years; he had scarcely arrived there when, as he was walking on the ramparts of the town with two other officers, a shell burst at their feet, and a fragment of it killed the chevalier without so much as touching his companions, so that the event was regarded as a direct act of Providence.

As for the abbé, his story is longer and stranger.

He parted from the chevalier in the neighbourhood of Genoa, and crossing the whole of Piedmont, part of Switzerland, and a corner of Germany, entered Holland under the name of Lamartellière. After many hesitations as to the place where he would settle, he finally retired to Viane, of which the Count of Lippe was at that time sovereign; there he made the acquaintance of a gentleman who presented him to the count as a French religious refugee.

The count, even in this first conversation, found that the foreigner who had come to seek safety in his dominions possessed not only great intelligence but a very solid sort of intelligence, and seeing that the Frenchman was conversant with letters and with learning, proposed that he should undertake the education of his son, who at that time was nine years old. Such a proposal was a stroke of fortune for the abbé de Ganges, and he did not dream of refusing it.

The abbé de Ganges was one of those men who have great mastery over themselves: from the moment when he saw that his interest, nay, the very safety of his life required it, he concealed with extreme care whatever bad passions existed within him, and only allowed his good qualities to appear. He was a tutor who supervised the heart as sharply as the mind, and succeeded in making of his pupil a prince so accomplished in both respects, that the

Count of Lippe, making use of such wisdom and such knowledge, began to consult the tutor upon all matters of State, so that in course of time the so-called Lamartellière, without holding any public office, had become the soul of the little principality.

The countess had a young relation living with her, who though without fortune was of a great family, and for whom the countess had a deep affection; it did not escape her notice that her son's tutor had inspired this poor young girl with warmer feelings than became her high station, and that the false Lamartellière, emboldened by his own growing credit, had done all he could to arouse and keep up these feelings. The countess sent for her cousin, and having drawn from her a confession of her love, said that she herself had indeed a great regard for her son's governor, whom she and her husband intended to reward with pensions and with posts for the services he had rendered to their family and to the State, but that it was too lofty an ambition for a man whose name was Lamartellière, and who had no relations nor family that could be owned, to aspire to the hand of a girl who was related to a royal house; and that though she did not require that the man who married her cousin should be a Bourbon, a Montmorency, or a Rohan, she did at least desire that he should be somebody, though it were but a gentleman of Gascony or Poitou.

The Countess of Lippe's young kinswoman went and repeated this answer, word for word, to her lover, expecting him to be overwhelmed by it; but, on the contrary, he replied that if his birth was the only obstacle that opposed their union, there might be means to remove it. In fact, the abbé, having spent eight years at the prince's court, amid the strongest testimonies of confidence and esteem, thought himself sure enough of the prince's good-will to venture upon the avowal of his real name.

He therefore asked an audience of the countess, who immediately granted it. Bowing to her respectfully, he said, "Madame, I had flattered myself that your Highness honoured me with your esteem, and yet you now oppose my happiness: your Highness's relative is willing to accept me as a husband, and the prince your son authorises my wishes and pardons my boldness; what have I done to you, madame, that you alone should be against me? and with what can you reproach me during the eight years that I have had the honour of serving your Highness?"

"I have nothing to reproach you with, monsieur," replied the countess: "but I do not wish to incur reproach on my own part by permitting such a marriage: I thought you too sensible and reasonable a man to need reminding that, while you confined yourself to suitable requests and moderate ambitions, you had reason to be pleased with our

gratitude. Do you ask that your salary shall be doubled? The thing is easy. Do you desire important posts? They shall be given you; but do not, sir, so far forget yourself as to aspire to an alliance that you cannot flatter yourself with a hope of ever attaining."

"But, madame," returned the petitioner, "who told you that my birth was so obscure as to debar me from all hope of obtaining your consent?"

"Why, you yourself, monsieur, I think," answered the countess in astonishment; "or if you did not say so, your name said so for you."

"And if that name is not mine, madame?" said the abbé, growing bolder; "if unfortunate, terrible, fatal circumstances have compelled me to take that name in order to hide another that was too unhappily famous, would your Highness then be so unjust as not to change your mind?"

"Monsieur," replied the countess, "you have said too much now not to go on to the end. Who are you? Tell me. And if, as you give me to understand, you are of good birth, I swear to you that want of fortune shall not stand in the way."

"Alas, madame," cried the abbé, throwing himself at her feet, "my name, I am sure, is but too familiar to your Highness, and I would willingly at this moment give half my blood that you had never heard it uttered; but you have said it, madame, I

have gone too far to recede. Well, then, I am that unhappy abbé de Ganges whose crimes are known, and of whom I have more than once heard you speak."

"The abbé de Ganges!" cried the countess in horror,—"the abbé de Ganges! You are that execrable abbé de Ganges whose very name makes one shudder? And to you, to a man thus infamous, we have entrusted the education of our only son? Oh, I hope, for all our sakes, monsieur, that you are speaking falsely; for if you were speaking the truth I think I should have you arrested this very instant and taken back to France to undergo your punishment. The best thing you can do, if what you have said to me is true, is instantly to leave not only the castle, but the town and the principality; it will be torment enough for the rest of my life whenever I think that I have spent seven years under the same roof with you."

The abbé would have replied; but the countess raised her voice so much, that the young prince, who had been won over to his tutor's interests and who was listening at his mother's door, judged that his protégé's business was taking an unfavourable turn, and went in to try and put things right. He found his mother so much alarmed that she drew him to her by an instinctive movement, as though to put herself under his protection, and beg and pray as he

might, he could only obtain permission for his tutor to go away undisturbed to any country of the world that he might prefer, but with an express prohibition of ever again entering the presence of the Count or the Countess of Lippe.

The abbé de Ganges withdrew to Amsterdam, where he became a teacher of languages, and where his lady-love soon after came to him and married him: his pupil, whom his parents could not induce, even when they told him the real name of the false Lamartellière, to share their horror of him, gave him assistance as long as he needed it; and this state of things continued until upon his wife attaining her majority he entered into possession of some property that belonged to her. His regular conduct and his learning, which had been rendered more solid by long and serious study, caused him to be admitted into the Protestant consistory; there, after an exemplary life, he died, and none but God ever knew whether it was one of hypocrisy or of penitence.

As for the Marquis de Ganges, who had been sentenced, as we have seen, to banishment and the confiscation of his property, he was conducted to the frontier of Savoy and there set at liberty. After having spent two or three years abroad, so that the terrible catastrophe in which he had been concerned should have time to be hushed up, he came back

to France, and as nobody—Madame de Rossan being now dead—was interested in prosecuting him, he returned to his castle at Ganges, and remained there, pretty well hidden. M. de Baville, indeed, the Lieutenant of Languedoc, learned that the marquis had broken from his exile; but he was told, at the same time, that the marquis, as a zealous Catholic, was forcing his vassals to attend mass, whatever their religion might be: this was the period in which persons of the Reformed Church were being persecuted, and the zeal of the marquis appeared to M. de Baville to compensate and more than compensate for the peccadillo of which he had been accused; consequently, instead of prosecuting him, he entered into secret communication with him, reassuring him about his stay in France, and urging on his religious zeal; and in this manner twelve years passed by.

During this time the marquise's young son, whom we saw at his mother's deathbed, had reached the age of twenty, and being rich in his father's possessions—which his uncle had restored to him—and also by his mother's inheritance, which he had shared with his sister, had married a girl of good family, named Mademoiselle de Moissac, who was both rich and beautiful. Being called to serve in the royal army, the count brought his young wife to the castle of Ganges, and, having fer-

vently commended her to his father, left her in his charge.

The Marquis de Ganges was forty-two years old, and scarcely seemed thirty; he was one of the handsomest men living; he fell in love with his daughter-in-law and hoped to win her love, and in order to promote this design, his first care was to separate from her, under the excuse of religion, a maid who had been with her from childhood and to whom she was greatly attached.

This measure, the cause of which the young marquise did not know, distressed her extremely. It was much against her will that she had come to live at all in this old castle of Ganges, which had so recently been the scene of the terrible story that we have just told. She inhabited the suite of rooms in which the murder had been committed; her bedchamber was the same which had belonged to the late marquise; her bed was the same; the window by which she had fled was before her eyes; and everything, down to the smallest article of furniture, recalled to her the details of that savage tragedy. But even worse was her case when she found it no longer possible to doubt her father-in-law's intentions; when she saw herself beloved by one whose very name had again and again made her childhood turn pale with terror, and when she was left alone at all hours of the day in the sole company of the

man whom public rumour still pursued as a murderer. Perhaps in any other place the poor lonely girl might have found some strength in trusting herself to God; but there, where God had suffered one of the fairest and purest creatures that ever existed to perish by so cruel a death, she dared not appeal to Him, for He seemed to have turned away from this family.

She waited, therefore, in growing terror; spending her days, as much as she could, with the women of rank who lived in the little town of Ganges, and some of whom, eye-witnesses of her mother-in-law's murder, increased her terrors by the accounts which they gave of it, and which she, with the despairing obstinacy of fear, asked to hear again and again. As to her nights, she spent the greater part of them on her knees, and fully dressed, trembling at the smallest sound; only breathing freely as daylight came back, and then venturing to seek her bed for a few hours' rest.

At last the marquis's attempts became so direct and so pressing, that the poor young woman resolved to escape at all costs from his hands. Her first idea was to write to her father, explain to him her position and ask help; but her father had not long been a Catholic, and had suffered much on behalf of the Reformed religion, and on these accounts it was clear that her letter would be opened by the

marquis on pretext of religion, and thus that step, instead of saving, might destroy her. She had thus but one resource: her husband had always been a Catholic; her husband was a captain of dragoons, faithful in the service of the king and faithful in the service of God; there could be no excuse for opening a letter to him; she resolved to address herself to him, explained the position in which she found herself, got the address written by another hand, and sent the letter to Montpellier, where it was posted.

The young marquis was at Metz when he received his wife's missive. At that instant all his childish memories awoke; he beheld himself at his dying mother's bedside, vowing never to forget her and to pray daily for her. The image presented itself of this wife whom he adored, in the same room, exposed to the same violence, destined perhaps to the same fate; all this was enough to lead him to take positive action: he flung himself into a post-chaise, reached Versailles, begged an audience of the king, cast himself, with his wife's letter in his hand, at the feet of Louis XIV, and besought him to compel his father to return into exile, where he swore upon his honour that he would send him everything he could need in order to live properly.

The king was not aware that the Marquis de Ganges had disobeyed the sentence of banishment,

and the manner in which he learned it was not such as to make him pardon the contradiction of his laws. In consequence he immediately ordered that if the Marquis de Ganges were found in France he should be proceeded against with the utmost rigour.

Happily for the marquis, the Comte de Ganges, the only one of his brothers who had remained in France, and indeed in favour, learned the king's decision in time. He took post from Versailles, and making the greatest haste, went to warn him of the danger that was threatening; both together immediately left Ganges, and withdrew to Avignon. The district of Venaissin, still belonging at that time to the pope and being governed by a vice-legate, was considered as foreign territory. There he found his daughter, Madame d'Urban, who did all she could to induce him to stay with her; but to do so would have been to flout Louis XIV's orders too publicly, and the marquis was afraid to remain so much in evidence lest evil should befall him; he accordingly retired to the little village of l'Isle, built in a charming spot near the fountain of Vaucluse; there he was lost sight of; none ever heard him spoken of again, and when I myself travelled in the south of France in 1835, I sought in vain any trace of the obscure and forgotten death which closed so turbulent and stormy an existence.

As, in speaking of the last adventures of the

Marquis de Ganges, we have mentioned the name of Madame d'Urban, his daughter, we cannot exempt ourselves from following her amid the strange events of her life, scandalous though they may be; such, indeed, was the fate of this family, that it was to occupy the attention of France through well-nigh a century, either by its crimes or by its freaks.

On the death of the marquise, her daughter, who was barely six years old, had remained in the charge of the dowager Marquise de Ganges, who, when she had attained her twelfth year, presented to her as her husband the Marquis de Perrant, formerly a lover of the grandmother herself. The marquis was seventy years of age, having been born in the reign of Henry IV; he had seen the court of Louis XIII and that of Louis XIV's youth, and he had remained one of its most elegant and favoured nobles; he had the manners of those two periods, the politest that the world has known, so that the young girl, not knowing as yet the meaning of marriage and having seen no other man, yielded without repugnance, and thought herself happy in becoming the Marquise de Perrant.

The marquis, who was very rich, had quarrelled with his younger brother, and regarded him with such hatred that he was marrying only to deprive his brother of the inheritance that would rightfully accrue to him, should the elder die childless. Un-

fortunately, the marquis soon perceived that the step which he had taken, however efficacious in the case of another man, was likely to be fruitless in his own. He did not, however, despair, and waited two or three years, hoping every day that Heaven would work a miracle in his favour; but as every day diminished the chances of this miracle, and his hatred for his brother grew with the impossibility of taking revenge upon him, he adopted a strange and altogether antique scheme, and determined, like the ancient Spartans, to obtain by the help of another what Heaven refused to himself.

The marquis did not need to seek long for the man who should give him his revenge: he had in his house a young page, some seventeen or eighteen years old, the son of a friend of his, who, dying without fortune, had on his deathbed particularly commended the lad to the marquis. This young man, a year older than his mistress, could not be continually about her without falling passionately in love with her; and however much he might endeavour to hide his love, the poor youth was as yet too little practised in dissimulation to succeed in concealing it from the eyes of the marquis, who, after having at first observed its growth with uneasiness, began on the contrary to rejoice in it, from the moment when he had decided upon the scheme that we have just mentioned.

The marquis was slow to decide but prompt to execute. Having taken his resolution, he summoned his page, and, after having made him promise inviolable secrecy, and having undertaken, on that condition, to prove his gratitude by buying him a regiment, explained what was expected of him. The poor youth, to whom nothing could have been more unexpected than such a communication, took it at first for a trick by which the marquis meant to make him own his love, and was ready to throw himself at his feet and declare everything; but the marquis seeing his confusion, and easily guessing its cause, reassured him completely by swearing that he authorised him to take any steps in order to attain the end that the marquis had in view. As in his inmost heart the aim of the young man was the same, the bargain was soon struck: the page bound himself by the most terrible oaths to keep the secret; and the marquis, in order to supply whatever assistance was in his power, gave him money to spend, believing that there was no woman, however virtuous, who could resist the combination of youth, beauty, and fortune: unhappily for the marquis, such a woman, whom he thought impossible, did exist, and was his wife.

The page was so anxious to obey his master, that from that very day his mistress remarked the alteration that arose from the permission given him—his

prompt obedience to her orders and his speed in executing them, in order to return a few moments the sooner to her presence. She was grateful to him, and in the simplicity of her heart she thanked him. Two days later the page appeared before her splendidly dressed; she observed and remarked upon his improved appearance, and amused herself in conning over all the parts of his dress, as she might have done with a new doll. All this familiarity doubled the poor young man's passion, but he stood before his mistress, nevertheless, abashed and trembling, like Cherubino before his fair godmother. Every evening the marquis inquired into his progress, and every evening the page confessed that he was no farther advanced than the day before; then the marquis scolded, threatened to take away his fine clothes, to withdraw his own promises, and finally to address himself to some other person. At this last threat the youth would again call up his courage, and promise to be bolder to-morrow; and on the morrow would spend the day in making a thousand compliments to his mistress's eyes, which she, in her innocence, did not understand. At last, one day, Madame de Perrant asked him what made him look at her thus, and he ventured to confess his love; but then Madame de Perrant, changing her whole demeanour, assumed a face of sternness and bade him go out of her room.

The poor lover obeyed, and ran, in despair, to confide his grief to the husband, who appeared sincerely to share it, but consoled him by saying that he had no doubt chosen his moment badly; that all women, even the least severe, had inauspicious hours in which they would not yield to attack, and that he must let a few days pass, which he must employ in making his peace, and then must take advantage of a better opportunity, and not allow himself to be rebuffed by a few refusals; and to these words the marquis added a purse of gold, in order that the page might, if necessary, win over the marquise's waiting-woman.

Guided thus by the older experience of the husband, the page began to appear very much ashamed and very penitent; but for a day or two the marquise, in spite of his apparent humility, kept him at a distance: at last, reflecting no doubt, with the assistance of her mirror and of her maid, that the crime was not absolutely unpardonable, and after having reprimanded the culprit at some length, while he stood listening with eyes cast down, she gave him her hand, forgave him, and admitted him to her companionship as before.

Things went on in this way for a week. The page no longer raised his eyes and did not venture to open his mouth, and the marquise was beginning to regret the time in which he used to look and

to speak, when, one fine day while she was at her toilet, at which she had allowed him to be present, he seized a moment when the maid had left her alone, to cast himself at her feet and tell her that he had vainly tried to stifle his love, and that, even although he were to die under the weight of her anger, he must tell her that this love was immense, eternal, stronger than his life. The marquise upon this wished to send him away, as on the former occasion, but instead of obeying her, the page, better instructed, took her in his arms. The marquise called, screamed, broke her bell-rope; the waiting-maid, who had been bought over, according to the marquis's advice, had kept the other women out of the way, and was careful not to come herself. Then the marquise, resisting force by force, freed herself from the page's arms, rushed to her husband's room, and there, bare-necked, with floating hair, and looking lovelier than ever, flung herself into his arms and begged his protection against the insolent fellow who had just insulted her. But what was the amazement of the marquise, when, instead of the anger which she expected to see break forth, the marquis answered coldly that what she was saying was incredible, that he had always found the young man very well behaved, and that, no doubt, having taken up some frivolous ground of resentment against him, she was employing this

means to get rid of him; but, he added, whatever might be his love for her, and his desire to do everything that was agreeable to her, he begged her not to require this of him, the young man being his friend's son, and consequently his own adopted child. It was now the marquise who, in her turn, retired abashed, not knowing what to make of such a reply, and fully resolving, since her husband's protection failed her, to keep herself well guarded by her own severity.

Indeed, from that moment the marquise behaved to the poor youth with so much prudery, that, loving her as he did, sincerely, he would have died of grief, if he had not had the marquis at hand to encourage and strengthen him. Nevertheless, the latter himself began to despair, and to be more troubled by the virtue of his wife than another man might have been by the levity of his. Finally, he resolved, seeing that matters remained at the same point and that the marquise did not relax in the smallest degree, to take extreme measures. He hid his page in a closet of his wife's bedchamber, and, rising during her first sleep, left empty his own place beside her, went out softly, double-locked the door, and listened attentively to hear what would happen.

He had not been listening thus for ten minutes when he heard a great noise in the room, and the page trying in vain to appease it. The marquis

hoped that he might succeed, but the noise increasing, showed him that he was again to be disappointed; soon came cries for help, for the marquise could not ring, the bell-ropes having been lifted out of her reach, and no one answering her cries, he heard her spring from her high bed, run to the door, and finding it locked rush to the window, which she tried to open: the scene had come to its climax.

The marquis decided to go in, lest some tragedy should happen, or lest his wife's screams should reach some belated passer-by, who next day would make him the talk of the town. Scarcely did the marquise behold him when she threw herself into his arms, and pointing to the page, said—

"Well, monsieur, will you still hesitate to free me from this insolent wretch?"

"Yes, madame," replied the marquis; "for this insolent wretch has been acting for the last three months not only with my sanction but even by my orders."

The marquise remained stupefied. Then the marquis, without sending away the page, gave his wife an explanation of all that had passed, and besought her to yield to his desire of obtaining a successor, whom he would regard as his own child, so long as it was hers; but young though she was, the marquise answered with a dignity unusual at her age, that his power over her had the limits that

were set to it by law, and not those that it might please him to set in their place, and that however much she might wish to do what might be his pleasure, she would yet never obey him at the expense of her soul and her honour.

So positive an answer, while it filled her husband with despair, proved to him that he must renounce the hope of obtaining an heir; but since the page was not to blame for this, he fulfilled the promise that he had made, bought him a regiment, and resigned himself to having the most virtuous wife in France. His repentance was not, however, of long duration; he died at the end of three months, after having confided to his friend, the Marquis d'Urban, the cause of his sorrows.

The Marquis d'Urban had a son of marriageable age; he thought that he could find nothing more suitable for him than a wife whose virtue had come triumphantly through such a trial: he let her time of mourning pass, and then presented the young Marquis d'Urban, who succeeded in making his attentions acceptable to the beautiful widow, and soon became her husband. More fortunate than his predecessor, the Marquis d'Urban had three heirs to oppose to his collaterals, when, some two years and a half later, the Chevalier de Bouillon arrived at the capital of the county of Venaissin.

The Chevalier de Bouillon was a typical rake of

the period, handsome, young, and well-grown; the nephew of a cardinal who was influential at Rome, and proud of belonging to a house which had privileges of suzerainty. The chevalier, in his indiscreet fatuity, spared no woman; and his conduct had given some scandal in the circle of Madame de Maintenon, who was rising into power. One of his friends, having witnessed the displeasure exhibited towards him by Louis XIV, who was beginning to become devout, thought to do him a service by warning him that the king "*gardait une dent*" against him.[1]

"*Pardieu!*" replied the chevalier, "I am indeed unlucky when the only tooth left to him remains to bite me."

This pun had been repeated, and had reached Louis XIV, so that the chevalier presently heard, directly enough this time, that the king desired him to travel for some years. He knew the danger of neglecting such intimations, and since he thought the country after all preferable to the Bastille, he left Paris, and arrived at Avignon surrounded by the halo of interest that naturally attends a handsome young persecuted nobleman.

The virtue of Madame d'Urban was as much cried up at Avignon as the ill-behaviour of the chevalier had been reprobated in Paris. A reputation equal to his own, but so opposite in kind, could

[1] Translator's note.—"*Garder une dent*," that is, to keep up a grudge, means literally "to keep a tooth" against him.

not fail to be very offensive to him, therefore he determined immediately upon arriving to play one against the other.

Nothing was easier than the attempt. M. d'Urban, sure of his wife's virtue, allowed her entire liberty; the chevalier saw her wherever he chose to see her, and every time he saw her found means to express a growing passion. Whether because the hour had come for Madame d'Urban, or whether because she was dazzled by the splendour of the chevalier's belonging to a princely house, her virtue, hitherto so fierce, melted like snow in the May sunshine; and the chevalier, luckier than the poor page, took the husband's place without any attempt on Madame d'Urban's part to cry for help.

As all the chevalier desired was public triumph, he took care to make the whole town acquainted at once with his success; then, as some infidels of the neighbourhood still doubted, the chevalier ordered one of his servants to wait for him at the marquise's door with a lantern and a bell. At one in the morning, the chevalier came out, and the servant walked before him, ringing the bell. At this unaccustomed sound, a great number of townspeople, who had been quietly asleep, awoke, and, curious to see what was happening, opened their windows. They beheld the chevalier, walking gravely behind his servant, who continued to light his master's way and to ring,

along the course of the street that lay between Madame d'Urban's house and his own. As he had made no mystery to anyone of his love affair, nobody took the trouble even to ask him whence he came. However, as there might possibly be persons still unconvinced, he repeated this same jest, for his own satisfaction, three nights running; so that by the morning of the fourth day nobody had any doubts left.

As generally happens in such cases, M. d'Urban did not know a word of what was going on until the moment when his friends warned him that he was the talk of the town. Then he forbade his wife to see her lover again. The prohibition produced the usual results. On the morrow, as soon as M. d'Urban had gone out, the marquise sent for the chevalier to inform him of the catastrophe in which they were both involved; but she found him far better prepared than herself for such blows, and he tried to prove to her, by reproaches for her imprudent conduct, that all this was her fault; so that at last the poor woman, convinced that it was she who had brought these woes upon them, burst into tears. Meanwhile, M. d'Urban, who, being jealous for the first time, was the more seriously so, having learned that the chevalier was with his wife, shut the doors, and posted himself in the ante-chamber with his servants, in order to seize him as he came

out. But the chevalier, who had ceased to trouble himself about Madame d'Urban's tears, heard all the preparations, and, suspecting some ambush, opened the window, and, although it was one o'clock in the afternoon and the place was full of people, jumped out of the window into the street, and did not hurt himself at all, though the height was twenty feet, but walked quietly home at a moderate pace.

The same evening, the chevalier, intending to relate his new adventure in all its details, invited some of his friends to sup with him at the pastry-cook Lecoq's. This man, who was a brother of the famous Lecoq of the rue Montorgueil, was the cleverest eating-house-keeper in Avignon; his own unusual corpulence commended his cookery, and, when he stood at the door, constituted an advertisement for his restaurant. The good man, knowing with what delicate appetites he had to deal, did his very best that evening, and that nothing might be wanting, waited upon his guests himself. They spent the night drinking, and towards morning the chevalier and his companions, being then drunk, espied their host standing respectfully at the door, his face wreathed in smiles. The chevalier called him nearer, poured him out a glass of wine and made him drink with them; then, as the poor wretch, confused at such an honour, was thanking him with many bows, he said—

"*Pardieu,* you are too fat for Lecoq, and I must make you a capon."

This strange proposition was received as men would receive it who were drunk and accustomed by their position to impunity. The unfortunate pastry-cook was seized, bound down upon the table, and died under their treatment. The vice-legate being informed of the murder by one of the waiters, who had run in on hearing his master's shrieks, and had found him, covered with blood, in the hands of his butchers, was at first inclined to arrest the chevalier and bring him conspicuously to punishment. But he was restrained by his regard for the Cardinal de Bouillon, the chevalier's uncle, and contented himself with warning the culprit that unless he left the town instantly he would be put into the hands of the authorities. The chevalier, who was beginning to have had enough of Avignon, did not wait to be told twice, ordered the wheels of his chaise to be greased and horses to be brought. In the interval before they were ready the fancy took him to go and see Madame d'Urban again.

As the house of the marquise was the very last at which, after the manner of his leaving it the day before, the chevalier was expected at such an hour, he got in with the greatest ease, and, meeting a lady's-maid, who was in his interests, was taken to

the room where the marquise was. She, who had not reckoned upon seeing the chevalier again, received him with all the raptures of which a woman in love is capable, especially when her love is a forbidden one. But the chevalier soon put an end to them by announcing that his visit was a visit of farewell, and by telling her the reason that obliged him to leave her. The marquise was like the woman who pitied the fatigue of the poor horses that tore Damien limb from limb; all her commiseration was for the chevalier, who on account of such a trifle was being forced to leave Avignon. At last the farewell had to be uttered, and as the chevalier, not knowing what to say at the fatal moment, complained that he had no memento of her, the marquise took down the frame that contained a portrait of herself corresponding with one of her husband, and tearing out the canvas, rolled it up and gave it to the chevalier. The latter, so far from being touched by this token of love, laid it down, as he went away, upon a piece of furniture, where the marquise found it half an hour later. She imagined that his mind being so full of the original, he had forgotten the copy, and representing to herself the sorrow which the discovery of this forgetfulness would cause him, she sent for a servant, gave him the picture, and ordered him to take horse and ride after the chevalier's chaise. The man took a post-horse, and, mak-

ing great speed, perceived the fugitive in the distance just as the latter had finished changing horses. He made violent signs and shouted loudly, in order to stop the postillion. But the postillion having told his fare that he saw a man coming on at full speed, the chevalier supposed himself to be pursued, and bade him go on as fast as possible. This order was so well obeyed that the unfortunate servant only came up with the chaise a league and a half farther on; having stopped the postillion, he got off his horse, and very respectfully presented to the chevalier the picture which he had been bidden to bring him. But the chevalier, having recovered from his first alarm, bade him go about his business, and take back the portrait—which was of no use to him—to the sender. The servant, however, like a faithful messenger, declared that his orders were positive, and that he should not dare go back to Madame d'Urban without fulfilling them. The chevalier, seeing that he could not conquer the man's determination, sent his postillion to a farrier, whose house lay on the road, for a hammer and four nails, and with his own hands nailed the portrait to the back of his chaise; then he stepped in again, bade the postillion whip up his horses, and drove away, leaving Madame d'Urban's messenger greatly astonished at the manner in which the chevalier had used his mistress's portrait.

At the next stage, the postillion, who was going back, asked for his money, and the chevalier answered that he had none. The postillion persisted; then the chevalier got out of his chaise, unfastened Madame d'Urban's portrait, and told him that he need only put it up for sale in Avignon and declare how it had come into his possession, in order to receive twenty times the price of his stage; the postillion, seeing that nothing else was to be got out of the chevalier, accepted the pledge, and, following his instructions precisely, exhibited it next morning at the door of a dealer in the town, together with an exact statement of the story. The picture was bought back the same day for twenty-five louis.

As may be supposed, the adventure was much talked of throughout the town. Next day, Madame d'Urban disappeared, no one knew whither, at the very time when the relatives of the marquis were met together and had decided to ask the king for a *lettre-de-cachet*. One of the gentlemen present was entrusted with the duty of taking the necessary steps; but whether because he was not active enough, or whether because he was in Madame d'Urban's interests, nothing further was heard in Avignon of any consequences ensuing from such steps. In the meantime, Madame d'Urban, who had gone to the house of an aunt, opened negotiations with her husband that were entirely successful, and a month

after this adventure she returned triumphantly to the conjugal roof.

Two hundred pistoles, given by the Cardinal de Bouillon, pacified the family of the unfortunate pastry-cook, who at first had given notice of the affair to the police, but who soon afterwards withdrew their complaint, and gave out that they had taken action too hastily on the strength of a story told in joke, and that further inquiries showed their relative to have died of an apoplectic stroke.

Thanks to this declaration, which exculpated the Chevalier de Bouillon in the eyes of the king, he was allowed, after travelling for two years in Italy and in Germany, to return undisturbed to France.

Thus ends, not the family of Ganges, but the commotion which the family made in the world. From time to time, indeed, the playwright or the novelist calls up the pale and blood-stained figure of the marquise to appear either on the stage or in a book; but the evocation almost always ceases at her, and many persons who have written about the mother do not even know what became of the children. Our intention has been to fill this gap; that is why we have tried to tell what our predecessors left out, and to offer to our readers what the stage—and often the actual world—offers; comedy after melodrama.

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